NĀRĀYAṆ VĀMAN ṬIḶAK

The Christian Poet of Maharashtra

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

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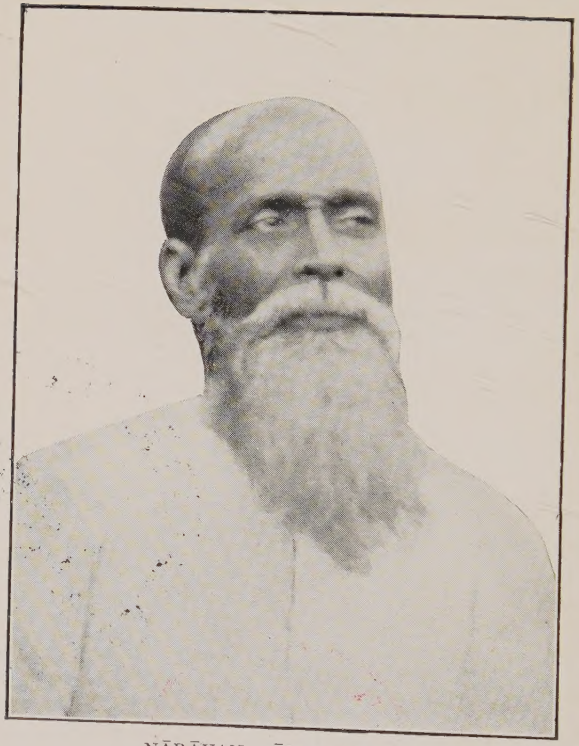

NĀRĀYAṆ VĀMAN ṬIḶAK

BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

Narayan Vaman Tilak

The Christian Poet of Maharashtra

BY

J. C. WINSLOW, M.A.

CHRISTA-SEVA-SANGH ASHRAM, POONA

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PREFACE

" They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build."

So sang Wordsworth amid the glories of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. He meant that the builders of that noble fane were men of spiritual vision and living faith, men whose eyes were fixed upon the eternal architype, the "pattern laid up in the heavens," to which they wrestled to give material embodiment. Rupees and workmen are all that are needed to rear a Taj Mahal Hotel; a Taj Mahal is built by faith and love. So it is with the building of a nation. The measure of its true greatness is, not that of commercial prosperity or military prowess, but rather the measure in which it bodies forth the eternal truth and goodness and beauty that lie at the unseen heart of the world; and its greatest builders, in like manner, are those who themselves have seen the heavenly vision and can open the eyes of others to see it too.

If this be true, then assuredly we are right in giving a place among the true builders of modern India to Nārāyaṇ Vāman Ṭiḷak. For Ṭiḷak was of the company of the men of faith, for whom the unseen verities are far more evident and more sure than the passing shows of the world, and both by the witness of his life and character and through the magic of his poetry was able to share with others the vision which was his own unfailing inspiration. The influence which his ideals and writings exerted, and

still exert, in Western India, and above all amongst the Christian community, in whose development he played so important a part, is of a quality which deserves a wider sphere. It is hoped that the present biography may do something towards providing that wider sphere.

In his will Ṭiḷak expressed the hope that, if anyone after his death desired to write about him, they would picture him exactly as he was. I have tried in this book to respect his wish, and in order to do so have endeavoured, as far as possible, to tell his story and portray his mind through the medium of his own writings in prose and verse. Ṭiḷak was fond of saying that a nation's soul is most truly revealed in its poetry. If this be true of individuals also, then we may hope to come nearest to the true Ṭiḷak, "as he was," through the study of his poems, and a large number of these have been translated in the present work. In one or two instances I have given translations which the poet himself had made. To Dr. N. Macnicol, of Poona, I am indebted for permission to reprint some of his renderings (pp. 93-110). For the rest I am myself responsible, and whilst deeply conscious of their inadequacy to convey the literary beauty of the originals, have hope that they will at least reveal something of the poet's mind. I have to thank Canon C. H. Robinson, Editor of *The East and West*, for leave to reprint four of these poems, which appeared in that Quarterly in an article about the subject of this biography. In the case of quotation from Ṭiḷak's own writings in English, I have very occasionally ventured to alter a word or phrase which was unidiomatic or obscure. Second only to my debt to Ṭiḷak's own writings is that which I owe to his wife and son and daughter for the information which they have freely put at my disposal and without which it would have been impossible for

me to accomplish my task. I must also thank the Rev. J. F. Edwards, of the American Marāṭhī Mission, the Rev. B. Uzgare, of the United Free Church, and other friends for valuable material which they have allowed me to use.

It is probable that criticisms will be raised from two opposite directions by the readers of this biography. The story of Ṭiḷak's conversion to the Christian faith will be distressing to some Hindu readers, and will seem to detract from the value of the services which the poet rendered to his country. There will be Christian readers, on the other hand, who will look askance at what may appear to them as Ṭiḷak's undue sympathy with Hinduism, specially during the last years of his life. For my own part I have simply tried, in both cases, to describe as accurately as possible the motives which prompted him; and I trust that those who find it impossible to believe that he was right may at least realize that in both instances he was convinced that he was acting under divine leading. Perhaps if he had wholly satisfied either type of critic he would have been less great. Perhaps it may be found that Ṭiḷak possesses no title to fame more lasting than this, that he pointed the way by which the goodly heritage of India's religious faith may find itself not superseded but fulfilled in Christ.

Christa-Seva-Sangh Ashram, J.C.W.
Junnar.
Aug. 18, 1923.

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I

EARLY LIFE

NĀRĀYAṆ VĀMAN ṬIḶAK was born at Karazgāon, in the Dāpoli *tālukā*[1] of the Ratnāgiri district of Bombay Presidency, in the year 1862.[2] He came of a family of Chitpāvan Brāhmans—that brilliant stock which produced in earlier days the Peshwas, and in recent times such great personalities as Mahādev Govind Rānaḍe, the pioneer of social reform; Paṇḍitā Ramābāī and Nehemiah Goreh, renowned scholars and Christians; Gopāl Kṛishṇa Gokhale and Bāl Gangādhar Ṭiḷak (the latter only a distant relation of the poet), the outstanding Moderate and Extremist leaders of the last generation; and, in the present generation, the Liberal G. K. Devadhar and the Nationalist N. C. Kelkar.[3]

If the earliest years of life are the most important of all for the formation of character, two influences would seem to have specially contributed during these years to the making of the future poet and religious leader—the natural scenery amid which his early childhood was passed, and the life of the home in which he grew up.

[1] A tālukā is a subdivision of a district.

[2] There is not absolute certainty as to the year of his birth, but the date given above is probably correct.

[3] It is noteworthy, however, that nearly all the great Marāṭhā poet-saints were Deśasth, not Koṅkanasth, viz. inhabitants of the Deccan plateau east of the Western Ghats, and not of that strip of land west of the ghats, known as the Koṅkan, from which Ṭiḷak came.

Narayan Vaman Tilak

Karazgāon lies about a hundred miles south-east of Bombay, in the belt of country, some fifty miles across, which stretches from the Western Ghats to the sea. To the east rises the great rugged wall of mountains upon which Mahableshwar is situated—that seaward face of them too sheer and too cruelly lashed by the monsoon winds to admit of more than the scantiest vegetation; but from the foot of these hills westward to the sea is a land of extraordinary richness and fertility, showing even in the dry season a wealth of foliage that to the visitor from the dusty Deccan seems almost incredible, and in the months from June to October (with the average rainfall of over 100 inches) bursting into a green paradise of astonishing loveliness. It was in the midst of such a prodigal variety of natural beauty that young Nārāyaṇ grew up, and this can hardly have been without its influence in tuning his mind to that discerning love of nature of which his poetry shows such abundant evidence.

The home which reared him was not his father's. His father's village was Chikhalgāon, in another part of the same district; but his father Vāmanrāo[1] was a *talāṭhī*, or government registrar, with a circle of villages to visit regularly; and so, because his profession took him constantly away from home, as also perhaps because of a certain natural tendency to aloofness and dislike of family life, his wife was sent to reside at her father's home at Karazgāon, where Nārāyaṇ was born. Thus it came about that in his earliest home life he was moulded especially by two personalities that left their indelible mark upon him, those of his mother and his

[1] The poet's second name Vāman indicates, according to the usual practice, his father's first and distinctive name.

mother's father. The latter was a *sādhu*,[1] who after a pilgrimage to Paṇḍharpūr[2] was spending his declining years in quiet retirement, devoting himself solely to worship and meditation. The old man was young Nārāyaṇ's constant friend and playmate. He would go out into the jungle, taking the boy with him, and there they would pass the day singing the *bhajans*[3] that he loved, and interspersing them with lighter frolics among the trees. Sometimes the old man would sit for a long space, calling again and again upon God by his favourite name "Nārāyaṇ"; and it was in fact he who gave to his young grandson this name, by which he came to be known, though he had originally been called Māruti. The people of Karazgāon regarded the old sādhu as more than half a madman. But, be that as it may, we can hardly be wrong in tracing to him the source of that cheerful aloofness from the world, that understanding love of children, that merry delight in dancing and play, which marked his grandson in after years, and which neither troubles nor old age could lessen.

His mother came of the family of Beḍekar, and her own name was Jānakibāī. She was a woman of most lovable nature and of a deep religious faith. From his early years she sought to impress on him the fear of God and the service of men. The boy was devotedly attached to her. Often has he declared since that he has never known any

[1] Here *sādhu* is not used in the correct sense of *an initiated ascetic of one of the sectarian orders*, but is loosely used of a man spending the evening of his life in the practices of devotional religion.

[2] The central shrine of Viṭhobā and principal place of pilgrimage for the Marāṭhā country. Viṭhobā, or Viṭṭhal, is identified with Kṛishṇa. The name is thought by some scholars to be a Kanarese corruption of Vishṇu.

[3] *Bhajan* is a word which covers any kind of religious lyric, while *abhaṅg* is a special type. See p. 90.

woman so nearly perfect as his mother; and forty-five years after her death he could still declare, "I love her most ardently to this day." She was, moreover, a poetess, a ready composer of women's songs; and Ṭiḷak believed that it was from her that he inherited much of his poetical faculty. It was she, too, who, by teaching him to read and write, laid the foundation of his future learning.

This passionate attachment which Nārāyaṇ felt to his mother was accentuated, not only by his father's long absences, but by the lack of sympathy which he received from him when they were together. For Vāmanrāo was a hard man, and also a great believer in astrology and omens. At the birth of each of his children he used diligently to study the child's horoscope. Nārāyaṇ he found to be born under evil stars and destined to forsake the faith of his fathers, and he used to treat him, in consequence, with an almost unbearable indifference.

When Nārāyaṇ was seven years old, this earliest and happy home-life of his was suddenly broken up. His father was transferred to Mokhāḍā, in the Nāsik district, and, wishing still to make a separate arrangement for his wife and family apart from himself, he established them at Kalyāṇ, now the well-known railway junction an hour's run from Bombay, where the Poona and Nāsik lines divide. There were now five children, of whom the eldest was a girl, and Nārāyaṇ the eldest boy. No less than seventeen children were born, but only three boys and two girls survived. Sakhārām, the second son, was in favour with his father, as also was Sakhu, the younger daughter; but the youngest boy, Mahādev, was disliked as much as the eldest.

Here at Kalyāṇ four years were spent, and Nārāyaṇ's studies (in the vernacular only) advanced apace. He was

an untiring reader and devoured eagerly books far beyond his years. It was here, too, that his earliest poems were composed. Vāmanrāo would pay them occasional visits. At such times he would tear up his wife's poetry, which it displeased him that she should write.[1] On one occasion he found her in possession of translations of the books of Psalms and Proverbs from the Christian Old Testament, and he destroyed them, too, in hot anger.

Jānakibāī was ailing at this time, when news came one day from her husband that he was ill and needed her. She set out at once, indifferent to her own weakness, and taking all the children with her travelled the forty miles from Kalyāṇ to Mokhāḍā on foot. When she arrived, she found that her husband had been feigning illness to test her faithfulness; but the journey had proved too much for her delicate strength. She fell sick of a raging fever and died.

His mother's death was the beginning of a new stage in Nārāyaṇ's life. Though he was only eleven years old, he felt now that the ties which bound him to his home were severed. Showing already that independence of thought and action which marked him so strikingly in later life, he determined henceforth to make his own way in the world. After accompanying his father to Trimbakeśvar, the source of the Godāvarī river, fourteen miles from Nāsik, and there committing to the sacred waters the ashes of his beloved mother, he left his father, and coming

[1] In consequence of this drastic treatment only two lines of her poetry survive, which may be roughly translated:

"See what a majesty pervades
This doll of rags and wood!
Instructress she of tender maids
In arts of motherhood."

alone to Nāsik, sat down in sorrowful meditation upon the river bank. A boy called Māyale, of about his own age, was bathing in the river. Nārāyaṇ got into communication with him, and the boy took him to his own house. He was the only son of a widow, named Yesubāī, and this good woman took the young stranger to her house and cared for him like a mother. Nārāyaṇ's heart was set on learning, but Yesubāī was too poor to support him altogether, even if he had been willing to burden her. It was much to him that he had found a home, and for his food he would work in the daytime at such odd jobs as he could find, repairing at night to one of the great temples on the river side to study by the light of the dim temple lamp. Here it was that he met Gaṇesh Śāstrī Lele, the famous Vedic scholar, who, taking a fancy to the boy and recognising the keenness of his intelligence, undertook to teach him Sanskrit without charge; and it was not long before, under his tuition, Nārāyaṇ won the first prize in a competition for elocution and oratory, and attracted the attention and interest of Justice Rānaḍe, who was one of the founders of the competition. Ṭiḷak used to declare that his mother and Lele were his two *gurus*; and, indeed, his debt to the Śāstrī was only second to that which he owed his mother, for he taught him with all the thoroughness and accuracy of the old śāstric method, and the mark of his complete mastery of the language is stamped upon all Ṭiḷak's later work.

Hitherto he had given but little thought to the study of English; but a friend of his in the Nāsik High School was chaffing him one day upon his ignorance of the language. "How shall I learn English?" he asked him. "Get an English dictionary and start on that!" was the rejoinder. Nārāyaṇ took him at his word, and began to commit to

memory thousands of English words from A onwards. When he had plodded half-way through the volume, he went one day to the headmaster of the high school, eager for more thorough instruction in the language. "How much English have you learnt?" he was asked. "As far as M," was the reply. The headmaster took him into the school free of charge, and in two years educated him up to the fifth standard; poetry, languages and history being the subjects which attracted him most.

His father had sent the other four children to be under Nārāyaṇ's charge at Nāsik, and eight rupees a month on which to keep them. It was a heavy burden, but he accepted it, though his own education had to suffer. Sakhārām went through the high school, and was afterwards given a good education up to the B.A. degree, and became a high court pleader. Mahādev, the youngest, was also educated in the high school up to the Matriculation, but died soon afterwards, in the Hislop College at Nāgpur, in his sixteenth or seventeenth year. He was a boy of singularly lovable disposition, and lived, even while at school, almost like a sādhu. He would give away any money or clothes that he possessed with a prodigal generosity, to any who needed them. If he was sent with money to the bazaar, half of it at least would go in alms to the poor. His character exercised a deep and abiding influence upon Nārāyaṇ; and Professor Patvardhan, of the Fergusson College, Poona, who was his contemporary at school, also testified to the debt he owed him. Nārāyaṇ himself, after little more than two years in the high school, and after reaching the sixth standard, was obliged to leave school and set about earning enough to supplement the slender means of himself and his brothers and sisters, but he continued to prosecute his studies diligently in all leisure moments, and was through-

out life a student of English literature, acquiring thereby the power of writing and speaking English with ease and fluency.

He had not left school long when his relations began to press for his marriage. The proposal was far from congenial to him, for all his delight was in books and solitude; and, in fact, one of the reasons why his friends were anxious that his marriage should be hastened was their fear that his absorption in reading and his love of Nature's silences were making him eccentric and unfitting him for the duties of life. For a time he resisted, but eventually consented when it appeared that the wife whom his relations would select was one not entirely unknown nor uncongenial to him. At Jalālpūr, in an island of the Godāvarī, not far from Nāsik, lived a family of the name of Gokhale, with whom Nārāyaṇ was acquainted. Between this family and his own there were many remarkable resemblances. The head of the family, like his own father, was stern and orthodox to the point of fanaticism. A strain of moroseness, almost of madness, had marked him ever since the day when his father-in-law had been put to death on charges connected with the Mutiny of 1857, and he treated his children with studied neglect. His wife, like Jānakibāī, was a poetess, and on her fell the care of the children. Here, too, out of a large family of children (eighteen in all) five alone survived. Of the three girls the youngest, Manubāī, was the proposed bride. With this child, seven years younger than himself, Nārāyaṇ and his sisters used to play in the fields and the woods and by the river, and this acquaintanceship made him less anxious to oppose the wishes of his friends. Difficulties, however, were at once raised by the girl's father, on the ground that the Ṭiḷaks, although Chitpāvans like the Gokhales, were not close enough to

them for inter-marriage according to orthodox custom. But a way of escape was found. An elder sister of Manubāī was married to Nānā Sāheb Peṇḍse, who was then a *munsif* at Nāsik; and Peṇḍse, like Rānaḍe, had taken an interest in Nārāyaṇ ever since the time of his securing the elocution prize. He enjoyed the poems which the boy composed, and was struck particularly by the speed with which he turned them off. The prospect of connecting him with his own family by marriage pleased him; and, in order to circumvent the scruples of orthodoxy, he arranged for Manubāī to be adopted by her uncle, Govindrāo Gaṇesh Khāmbeṭe, and married from his house. Two days after the adoption the two were united. Nārāyaṇ was now eighteen years of age and his wife eleven.

The ten years which followed Ṭiḷak's marriage were for him years of constant change of occupation and scene. His mind was in the ferment of a great unrest, so that he could never continue in one stay. His impetuous and untiring intellect was pressing forward unceasingly into ever new fields of enquiry. He would sit for hours absorbed in study, heedless of meal-times and oblivious of any who might be seated with him. He had a passion to excel in oratory, and committed to memory whole speeches from Burke and Pitt and from translations of Demosthenes. But poetry—Sanskrit, Marāṭhī and English—was always his best-loved study; and his own poems, growing daily richer in imaginative power and more accurate in technique, flowed from him in moments of inspiration with extraodinary rapidity. Some Sanskrit poetry also he wrote in these early years; but this never stirred him as did his own beloved tongue, and he continued it but a short time.

Much of the unrest which possessed him, as we shall see more fully later, sprang from his eager and independent

search for truth, particularly in the sphere of religion. His wife, whose name was changed to Lakshmībāī after her marriage, was still but a child; and, leaving her with her own people at Jalālpur, Ṭiḷak would go forth on long and distant wanderings, returning to them from time to time for a few months' sojourn. He wandered in this way for a year or two in Khandesh, often begging his food from place to place as a sādhu, but for a time settling down to regular work as headmaster of a school in Dhāmak in the Varhāḍ district. He would give speeches, *Kīrtans*[1] and *Purāṇas*[2] in different places, and often earned in this way sufficient for his scanty needs. At one time we hear of him in sacred Dwārkā,[3] at another at Nāgpur, at another at Rājnāndgāon, working for six months in a printing press. Presently he is in Poona, and then again in Bombay, supporting himself by writing letters for illiterate people or by teaching in a Girgaum school. He had an enthusiasm for popular education, and during this period started, in succession, three schools in the Nāsik neighbourhood—one at Pañchavaṭī, one at Murbāḍ, where his father was now talāṭhī, and one at Wāṇi. He had a natural gift for teaching, and was loved both by the children and by the many adults who attended the school.

About 1887, his first son, Vidyādhar, was born, but died after a year. The child's death drew forth a poem, called *A Father's Tears*, which is now lost, but is said by Professor

[1] See p. 59.

[2] The word *Purāṇas* means primarily those mythological tales of the gods which, together with the epics, form the real Bible of the common people of India, and secondarily, as here, a recitation of this mythological poetry, accompanied by explanation and expansion.

[3] The central shrine of Kṛishṇa in Kathiawar, and a great centre of pilgrimage.

Patvardhan to have been finer than the poem of the same name now included in his published works. A daughter was born in 1889, whom they called Narmudā, but she too died, and her father, who was devoted to her, was prostrated with grief. But about 1891, during one of his quiet sojourns at Jalālpūr, another son, Dattātreya,[1] was born to him, and lived to become his heir; and from this time forwards he took his wife to be with him, and resolved to train himself to a more settled life. The opportunity came to him in a manner peculiarly welcome. A certain Appa Sāheb Buṭī, a wealthy citizen of Nāgpur, had spent an enormous sum of money in the collecting of Vedic and other religious literature, and had conceived the idea of editing these Sanskrit works in good vernacular translations. In this task he now invited Nārāyaṇ Ṭiḷak to help him. Nominally the post he offered him was that of tutor to his son, and for this he gave him forty rupees a month and a bungalow in a garden of his own outside the city, to which Ṭiḷak brought his wife and child, and where his young pupil also soon elected to live with his guru. But this teaching was only for an hour a day, and the rest of his time Ṭiḷak passed gladly enough in his patron's library, feasting his hungry intellect upon the wealth of spiritual provender which it contained. Day after day he would pore over the volumes of sacred literature, his mind so intent upon its own quest, and revelling so in this fresh opportunity of pursuing it, that little progress was made with the work of translation. A great religious controversy was raging at the time in Nāgpur; and Ṭiḷak, from the first no negligible opponent and now freshly equipped from his armoury of Sanskrit scriptures, entered the fray, and by his refutation of the leading and

[1] Changed to Devadatta at his baptism later, or familiarly Dattu.

most orthodox śāstrīs earned for himself the title of *Paṇḍit*.

His fame as a poet also spread abroad during those Nāgpur days, and men began to read his writings.[1] He also began now to publish at his patron's request a monthly magazine, called *Ṛishi*,[2] for the discussion of philosophic and religious questions; but a few numbers only appeared. That movement of his thought away from the lines of orthodox Hinduism, which we must trace in the next chapter, had now reached a point which made it difficult for him to continue in his present position and in the work associated with it. His restless spirit bade him yet again move onward. So, after a few brief months of existence, the *Ṛishi* expired; the work of translation ceased before one of the new scriptures had seen the light of day; the peaceful garden and the precious library were left behind; and the short years of his Nāgpur fame were ended.

[1] For some account of these early writings see p. 73.

[2] Literally "seer," the title used for the authors of the hymns of the Vedas.

II

CHANGE OF FAITH

WE are approaching now the turning-point of Ṭiḷak's life, his acceptance of the Christian faith; and in order to understand the causes which led him to this decision, it is necessary to glance backwards and trace in greater detail the successive influences which were shaping his mind.

We have seen that the home in which his earliest years were passed was one steeped in the atmosphere of vital religion. Probably no single influence contributed more towards that subsequent change of faith, the fear of which the stars had planted in his father's mind, than his father's own action in sending his wife away to her own home and her children with her. For the Brāhman of Dāpolī and its neighbourhood even to-day is inclined to look askance at the newer liberalism of Bombay or Poona, and to pride himself on the purity of his traditions; and in those days that region of the Koṅkan was the very home of the most rigid orthodoxy. Had Nārāyaṇ remained with his father, it is this atmosphere of almost fanatical orthodoxy which he would have breathed. But in his mother's home religion was fresh and fragrant. Her old father was no stiff conventionalist, but one who found God in the woods and the open country and in the shrine of his own heart, and from his mother he learnt to think of

God as One athirst for the loving devotion of His children, One who cares for them and heeds their prayers. From his mother, too, he learnt that ideal of service and gained the first glimpses of that glowing vision of human brotherhood which shaped all his later thought and work. "My mother, I do not know how," he said himself, "was a woman of faith and love. Though she never talked to us of Christ, yet she taught us to fear God and to love all."

The tendency, thus early planted in his mind, towards a liberal and independent religious outlook gained from his father's treatment of him an added touch of positive antagonism towards orthodox tradition. Even from his thirteenth or fourteenth year the system of caste seemed hateful to him; and later, but still before he became a Christian, he openly defied its regulations.[1] So from his early youth this pilgrim soul fared forth in independent and fearless adventure for the truth.

But now another strand was woven into his thought. From one of his teachers in his schooldays he gained a vision of his country's old greatness and glory, and became inspired with a passionate love for her and an intense longing to see her rise up to new heights of splendour and freedom. "In my early years," he says, "I came under the influence of a schoolmaster. Though this man never knew how to be truly useful to his country, yet he had the burning love of a true patriot. He made the little heads under his charge as dizzy with patriotism as his own. This circumstance and others gave a peculiar turn to my mind.

[1] E.g. on days of Śrāddha (offerings to the spirits of ancestors), when it is customary to feast Brāhmans, he would invite tailors and others of lower caste, even outcastes, to his house. After a time the priests refused to come to him to perform religious ceremonies, but he cared nothing for this and performed them for himself.

I well remember that even in my tender years, when I sat in the schoolroom for a lesson in geography, my mind was absent; for I was musing over the deep problem of India's future." Henceforward it was this yearning love for his country even more than his own eager quest for truth, which spurred him on. He longed to find for her a path by which she could become great and free, and could shake off those shackles which seemed to him to chain her. Whilst not indifferent to her political bondage, it was, above all, her moral and spiritual slavery which distressed his soul. Particularly he longed to sweep away the twin barriers of idolatry and caste. Love to God, the One Father of all men, and love to men, His children in the one human family, and brothers all of them—these were becoming the essential ideals that he burned to propagate. And, in attacking caste, he found himself soon striking also at one of its principal buttresses, the belief that a man's position in life is determined unalterably by his actions in a previous existence.

All through the ten years of wandering which followed his marriage, his mind was pressing forward on its untiring quest. It was this spiritual unrest which made it impossible for him to settle for long in any one place. It was this which drove him, whilst still little more than twenty years of age, to wander as a sādhu in Khandesh. Here he fell in with a kindred spirit, a sādhu from Bengal, and the two men held long and eager converse together. The notion had already been shaping itself in Ṭiḷak's mind that, if his motherland was to enter now upon a new period of greatness and progress, it could only be through the doorway of a new religious awakening. Now, as the outcome of his intercourse with his Bengali friend, he became convinced, not only that such an awakening was necessary, but further

that it would not come without such a breaking away from orthodox Hinduism as would amount to the founding of a new religion.

Gradually (as Ṭiḷak told me long afterwards, in speaking to me of these early years) the purpose shaped itself in his mind that he himself would be the founder of this new religion. Then he bethought him that all the founders of the great religions had been men who could work miracles, and that without such supernatural powers he would have little chance of success. How, then, might this power be gained? Surely by the practice of *yoga*, that pathway of spiritual exercises and disciplines, trodden by an age-long succession of India's saints. So with this end in view, he gave himself for two years to a life of the severest austerities. Day after day he would sit up on a mountain-top, absorbed in contemplation, nourished only by the scanty plants and fruits that he found there, indifferent alike to the scorching noonday and the cold night air. But his disillusionment came at last in an unexpected manner, when success seemed to be achieved. People from the villages below began to flock up the mountain to gain a *darśan*[1] of the solitary saint, and to implore his help in their various necessities; and in several instances strange cures were wrought by means of him. And then the enthusiasm knew no bounds, and the dweller on the mountain-top found himself the object of an admiring worship. But this very enthusiasm opened his eyes to the futility of the course he was pursuing. "See," he said to himself, "it is only for a glimpse of me or the hope of some temporal good that these people come. So far from hearing the teaching of my

[1] "Vision" of a god or man so holy that the very sight of him confers blessing.

new religion, they have no ears left for it. All their attention and all their talk is directed towards me myself. My mission can only prosper if I can somehow be lost in the teaching I give." So he descended from the mountain and his days of yoga[1] were ended.

But his rejection of the method of yoga and miracle implied no abandonment of his central aim. Though he was forced now to earn himself a living by teaching and in other ways, his zeal for the propagation of his new religion continued unabated. At one time, encouraged, perhaps, by his success in education, he contemplated founding a monastery and gathering about him a band of disciples. There followed the years at Nāgpur; and here, as we have seen, he found an unexpected opportunity for the most thorough study of the Vedas and other religious literature, and for the precise shaping of his own beliefs.

From this point we may continue the story in his own words. "While engrossed in the study of different religions and philosophies with my limited abilities, I found a most helpful friend in Nāgpur. My business was to read and write. He spent thousands of rupees in purchasing almost all the Vedic and philosophic literature of the Hindus available. In this lake of speculative thought and fiction I was plunging and swimming for three years. I loved to study, and this friend supplied me with means. By the end of this period I had all my new doctrines formulated. These were as follows:

"(1) There is an intelligent Creator of the universe, to whom all mankind are as children.

"(2) All scriptures, of whatever religion, are the works

[1] In the narrower sense of silent meditation and *tapas*, or self-inflicted austerities. For the place which yoga in the broader sense always retained in Ṭiḷak's mind, see below, p. 100 f.

of man; the book of Nature is the only true scripture revealing God.

"(3) There is no previous birth, nor are there re-births. A man's state in this life depends on his heredity and environment and on his own efforts.

"(4) Love to God and to man is the essence of all religions.

"(5) Idolatry is the supreme foe to be fought by true religion; but such virtues as love, truth, mercy may be personified and worshipped.

"I studied closely the lives of the founders of the various faiths. I was not at all satisfied with the careers and the conduct of many of them. However, I loved Buddha, and resolved to imitate him in everything except his failures. Strange to say, I never thought of the Bible or of Christ, for the reason that the Bible is so simple a book. We Brāhmans are by nature a people who have the ability of enjoying and admiring either such literature as is beyond our comprehension or that which puzzles us! Many Sanskrit books, if they were translated into the vernacular, would, I am sure, be discared by the Brāhmans as useless stuff. Let a Brāhman chant some *mantras*[1] which the people do not understand, and they will be charmed; but let him chant the same thing in the vernacular, and they will ridicule him. If the simplicity of the Bible was one reason why I never investigated Christianity, another and most important reason was that no preacher had ever spoken to me about Christ, and I had never seen any Christian books in Marāṭhī which I cared to read.

"At last, in the year 1892, my patron wanted me to edit a new monthly on Religion and Philosophy. Two

[1] Religious incantations.

numbers appeared successively, and then, on account of my new opinions, I had to give up both the editorship and the service of my benefactor. I at once obtained employment from the Rāja of Rajnāndgāon, who lived 170 miles from Nāgpur, and thither I proceeded. I was travelling in the intermediate class; and, as I was stepping into the compartment, instead of being rebuffed by the only European gentleman in the carriage, he made room for me with a smile. I had with me my favourite Sanskrit poet, Bhavabhūti, and this gentleman began talking to me about poets and poetry. I was much interested in what he said, and I soon discovered that he knew something of Sanskrit and much about Sanskrit literature. By and by he changed the subject, and asked me where I stood in my attitude towards Christianity. I told him my new doctrines, and, to my great surprise, he observed that I should be a Christian before a couple of years were passed. I thought it a mad prediction. We talked a long time. He said, 'Young man, God is leading you. Study the Bible and study the life of Jesus, and you will surely be a Christian.' I simply ridiculed what I regarded as this man's audacity. At last he prayed and gave me a copy of the New Testament. I promised him that I would read it, even though I should dislike it at first. I made the promise not so much for any interest I had in the Bible as for the feeling of personal friendship which this man's kindness had awakened. I got out at Rājnāndgāon, and we parted with a hearty good-bye. Strange that we never thought of enquiring as to each other's name, residence or occupation![1]

[1] Subsequent attempts have failed to establish the identity of this travelling companion; but the Rev. J. R. Hill, of Banda, recalls an occasion which seems to correspond with this in all respects except the date, which there is some difficulty in reconciling.

"According to my usual custom, I resolved to go through the book, marking with pencil the points worth noticing; but, when I reached the Sermon on the Mount, I could not tear myself away from those burning words of love and tenderness and truth. In these three chapters I found answers to the most abstruse problems of Hindu philosophy. It amazed me to see how here the most profound problems were completely solved. I went on eagerly reading to the last page of the Bible, that I might learn more of Christ."

At Rājnāndgāon he had considerable leisure for prosecuting his studies of Christianity further. He determined not to accept the new faith lightly, and it was only after months of careful study that he became intellectually convinced of its truth. Christ was the Teacher whom India and the world needed. "Five points in regard to Jesus Christ impressed me most deeply. First, I found in Him the ideal man. Second, it is He, and He alone, who makes love to God and to man of the same importance.[1] Third, His perfect identification with His Father. Fourth, His inconceivable faith in Himself as the life and the light of the world. Fifth, His Cross and the whole history of His crucifixion."

But there was a further step for him to take before the full goal was reached. He was convinced of Christianity as the true teaching; he had still to learn its power. He knew that Christ was the supreme Guru, but he had still to know Him as the living Saviour, by the might of whose indwelling Spirit the chains of human sin and weakness can be

[1] A Parsee friend of mine, criticizing this, claims that in the Parsee religion a true balance of love to God and man will be found. I do not know how far Ṭiḷak had studied the teaching of Zarathustra; but I expect he is here thinking mainly of Buddhism, Hinduism and Muhammadanism, finding in the first too little devotion to God and in the others inadequate stress on the service of men.

broken, and His teaching not only admired as a splendid though unattainable ideal, but carried out in daily life. This further discovery began to come to him first through his early and childlike experiences of prayer. "There was living at Rājnāndgāon a Christian Police Superintendent, who gave me a bundle of tracts, one of which—Bushnell's *Character of Jesus*—made me hunger to read and know more of Jesus. One day I began to doubt the truth of Christ's saying, 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you'; and like a rude, ignorant child, I resolved to put the words to the test. I prayed that I might get a book, then and there, throwing light on the history of Palestine and on the times when Jesus lived. I added in my prayer that, if my petitions were not granted, I would reject the doctrine that God hears and answers prayer. This was foolish, but God had pity on His child. Suddenly, the next day, I received orders transferring me to another office. To my great joy and astonishment I found in a box, under a heap of rags, three volumes, all religious books pertaining to Christ and Christianity, and containing information on the very points about which I had prayed. God continued after this to send me many wonderful answers to prayer."

But a richer understanding of the friendship of Christ came to him through the help of such men as the Reverend Sidoba Misal and his son, Jaiwantrāo, of the United Free Church Mission, and of Bābā Padmanjī, a learned convert in Bombay, with whom Ṭiḷak carried on a considerable correspondence at this time. "It was on the 10th of March, 1894, that I wrote my first letter to any Christian. This was to a man whom I knew by reputation as a writer. A few months after this date I believe I was a true Christian at heart." He had found in Jesus Christ the goal of his long search, that living Guru who could most richly satisfy his

soul's hunger; and to Him he gave himself in thankful devotion and with all the passionate enthusiasm of his ardent nature. "As a Hindu I had, and still have, a typical respect and love to my guru; and, when Jesus became my Guru, naturally I regarded and loved Him with all the fervour and intensity of a real disciple. I experienced a peculiar fellowship with Him. This much I know, that I could not be happy if I missed Him. The following hymn was written by me in this period:

My Friend, Life of my life,
My Jesus, where art Thou gone?
Come quickly! I die for Thee!
The world around me is darkness!
Without Thee no hunger, no food; no thirst, no water!
Thy absence sets me on the rack of pain!
A sinner, miserable sinner as I am,—
Oh Thou, the Friend of sinners, Thou my only Friend,
Art Thou forsaking me?

The change in his religious convictions could hardly fail to appear outwardly. "At last people were fully convinced that I was a Christian at heart. Then commenced such persecution as cannot easily be imagined by others than high-caste converts to Christianity in India. But God helped me and relieved me from many difficulties, spreading my table with spiritual food in the midst of my enemies. When I was seriously thinking of baptism I was suddenly reduced to penury, with loss of employment, loss of friends, and no acquaintances among Christians. My own wife, who appeared to be convinced of the truth, turned against me, and sought with the help of others to dissuade me from being baptized. During the month of November, 1894, three successive nights I had the same dream. Someone appeared, uttering the words, "Follow Him, fear nothing!" I at once wrote to the Rev. J. E. Abbott, of the American

Marāṭhī Mission, requesting him to publish the fact that I was a Christian. He did so, and I was greatly relieved. At last I came to Bombay, and was baptized[1] on the 10th of February, 1895, exactly two years after I received the Bible from the gentleman in the train. Thus the Lord leads His children, and thus His Will is done in the world."

Ṭiḷak never cared to speak much of the troubles which his conversion to the Christian faith brought upon him, regarding them as due to the fanaticism of a few individuals, and not as representing the real mind of his fellow countrymen. He would always far rather dwell on the generosity of the unchanged affection and esteem with which his friends regarded him, when once the first shock of their surprise and indignation had passed.[2] It will be sufficient, therefore, to record two incidents in illustration of the hardships which he had to face.

On one occasion, soon after his baptism, while staying in Bombay, he received through the post a parcel of sweets. He was about to eat some, when he remembered that he was going out to dinner with some Christian friends and must hurry to be in time; so, leaving the parcel open, he hastened off to keep his engagement. After dinner, the pastor who had baptized him took him to his house for the night. The next morning Ṭiḷak, returning home, found that in his absence a cat had eaten some of the sweets and had been poisoned and died, whilst his own life had been spared.

Another time, when it was known that he had become a Christian, he was at a ferry in a lonely place, waiting to cross the river, when he was accosted by a party of young men armed with sticks, who said that they had come to give

[1] By the Rev. Tukārām Nāthojī, an Indian pastor, in the old American Church.

[2] See further on this point, pp. 52–55.

him a sound beating for deserting the faith of his fathers to follow a foreign god. Inwardly quaking, Ṭiḷak answered that at least they might have the grace to provide him with one stout stick to defend himself against all of theirs. Meanwhile he was praying fervently for deliverance. Before they could reply a sound of approaching horse-hoofs was heard, and the men took to their heels and made off. Ṭiḷak waited to thank the horsemen to whom he owed his deliverance, but no one appeared. He crossed the river unmolested, heartily thanking God for his escape.

But it was the estrangement from his friends and relations, and, above all, the separation from his wife and son, which caused Ṭiḷak the keenest pangs. Lakshmībāī he had left at Jalālpūr, and Dattu with her, when he went to Bombay, without disclosing to them the object of his visit. When the news of his baptism arrived, his wife became frenzied with grief. "Look after her for me," he had said to his brother (who had come to him in Bombay to see for himself what Nārāyaṇ was planning to do, and who carried back the news), "but be careful! Remember, Gangā[1] is near." The warning was not unneeded. Several times the distracted woman tried to fling herself into the river or into the well. For weeks she was as one beside herself, while her sister cared for her. Then N. R. Peṇḍse, her brother-in-law, was transferred to Paṇḍharpūr as Mamledar, and Lakshmībāī went with them, taking her little son. She wrote passionate letters to her husband, in prose and in poetry, pleading with him to return. She said bitterly that she would write a tragedy and dedicate it to him. She seemed to be sick unto death with the agony of separation. He sent her repeated assurances that he would be true to

[1] The name by which the Godāvarī is often called in West India.

her, promising never to marry another nor to take away her child, though friends encouraged him to have the boy with him, believing that his mother would then soon follow. One thing only he could never do. He could never forsake Christ nor re-enter the fold of Hinduism.

He was now at Mahableshwar, teaching. As the season there drew to its close, his wife's calls to him became irresistibly moving. She was dying, dying for love, and he must not delay to come to her. So to Paṇḍharpūr he went. He found Lakshmībāī in an agony of distraction between conflicting longings. "My wife is dangerously ill"; he writes, "her position is quite pitiable. She is a noble woman, burning with a pure, true love and spirit of faithfulness. . . . She will die for love, but will not follow Christ for love. All my prayers and expostulations seem lost upon her."

Desperately they tried to win him back to Hinduism. His wife herself offered the Brāhmans of Paṇḍharpūr four thousand rupees' worth of jewellery if they would take him back. Bāl Gangādhar Ṭiḷak secured permission from the leading śāstrīs of Benares for his restoration. Peṇḍse, too, fell at the feet of the local Brāhmans and secured their consent to a merely nominal *prāyaśchitta*.[1] But no efforts of theirs could move him. He left them and returned to Bombay.

For five years he waited for her—years of unwearying love and prayer. He was given work with the American Marāṭhī Mission at Ahmadnagar. For two years his wife remained at Paṇḍharpūr. Then Peṇḍse was transferred to Ahmadnagar as deputy collector, and Lakshmībāī returned to her home at Jalālpūr. After three years more she decided

[1] Expiation or penance.

to go once again to Paṇḍharpūr, this time to the house of Sakhārām, her husband's brother; but soon, worried to death by the constant harassing of relations, she was about to escape from them when her husband arrived to visit her, and found to his joy and astonishment that she was willing to return with him to Ahmadnagar, if provision were made for her in a separate house. He agreed gladly, and secured her a house in the city. She let him go to her daily, and read and pray, but not teach. Presently she consented to live within the same compound with him, though still in a separate house; and, when plague broke out at Ahmadnagar, they went together to the Mission station at Rāhurī, where Christian friends found her willing to receive instruction. So, little by little, she drew nearer to him. At last she ceased to keep caste with him, and let him bring the water and help with the cooking. They went together in the hot weather of the year (1900) to Mahableshwar, and there it was that the barriers which had restrained her so long suddenly crumbled away. In a moment, inexplicably, her caste pride vanished. She was filled with a new love, and in the joy of it adopted two outcaste children. Intellectually, she had been long convinced concerning the Christian faith. The one bar to its acceptance was now removed. They returned to Rāhurī, where she was baptized with her son, Dattu; and, from that day onwards until the day of Ṭiḷak's death, it was she who was his first guide and counsellor, the loyal sharer in his disappointments and difficulties, his aspirations and ideals, and the guiding star of his moral life, without whose steadfast encouragement not a little of his choicest work would have been left undone.

III

AHMADNAGAR

WITH the acceptance of Christ as his Guru and Lord, Nārāyaṇ Ṭiḷak found that *śānti*[1] which he had so long sought. The turmoil and restlessness of his long spiritual quest ceased. In some ways, indeed, he remained always a seeker and a pilgrim; and we shall see later how, even in the last years of his life, he was able to launch out upon a fresh adventure. But the old disquiet of unsatisfied longing was gone, and together with this, the constant wanderings and changes of occupation came also to an end, and he settled down to those twenty-one years of fruitful service in connection with the American Marāṭhī Mission at Ahmadnagar, during which his main life's work was done. The first four or five years of this period were, indeed, as we have seen, saddened for him by his separation from his wife and child; but, after they had joined him, there followed a long period of steady activity, marked by a domestic life of rare beauty and happiness, and a public ministry of increasing usefulness.

Ahmadnagar is a town of about 40,000 people, the third largest in the Deccan, and is situated in the Deccan plateau about two thousand feet above the sea, due east of Bombay. The days of its greatness were in the sixteenth century, when it was the capital of an important Muhammadan dynasty; but in 1600 it fell into the hands of Akbar, who

[1] Mental and spiritual tranquillity.

captured the famous fort after a prolonged defence by Chānd Bībī (the "Noble Queen" of Meadows Taylor's novel), and in 1760 it passed under the dominion of the Marāṭhās. Ahmadnagar is not a great centre of political or educational activity like Poona, its interests being mainly commercial. It is the centre of a large agricultural district, which, owing to the uncertainty of the rainfall, is one of the worst famine-areas in India. Every third year, on an average, sees the district in the throes of a severe famine, which demands the establishment of relief-works and drives a considerable percentage of the population to leave their homes and seek for occupation elsewhere. Cattle are sold or die in great numbers, and till recently even the human mortality was very great. Now the Government has organized so efficient a system of relief that famine seldom brings actual starvation, though the sufferings endured by the people are still terrible.

Ahmadnagar is the headquarters of two Christian Missions: the American Marāṭhī Mission (Congregational) and the Ahmadnagar Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Anglican). The former, with which Ṭiḷak was associated, was founded in 1813, and was the first American foreign mission, and the first mission of any nationality in Western India. It has a network of mission stations throughout Mahārāshṭra, work being carried on in Bombay, Wai, Satārā, Sholāpur and elsewhere. But Ahmadnagar has always been its most important centre, and a number of sub-centres are established throughout the Ahmadnagar district, at smaller towns like Pārner, Rāhurī and Vadāla. There is a large community of Indian Christians throughout the district, where the chief work is pastoral and evangelistic. At Ahmadnagar itself are the central high schools for boys and girls, the union training school

for the training of village schoolmasters, and the theological seminary (now affiliated to Serampore) for those who wish to be prepared for the ordained ministry.

The American Marāṭhī Mission is probably the largest Christian missionary organization in Western India, and it was with this Mission that Ṭiḷak came in touch at the time when he entered the Christian Church. It was Dr. Abbott of that Mission, then editor of the Mission's weekly paper, *Dnyānodaya*, to whom he wrote asking him to publish the news of his being a Christian, and it was in the Mission's church in Byculla that he was baptized. It was natural, then, that he should take up work in connection with this Mission, and that so prominent and able a convert should be invited to strengthen the work at its most important centre.

But his links with the Mission and with Ahmadnagar would never have been forged so tight, had it not been for the friendship which rapidly arose between him and the Rev. R. A. Hume. The latter, who after nearly fifty years of work became perhaps the best-known missionary of Western India, was thirty years ago among the leaders of the American Mission. The friendship between him and Ṭiḷak was life-long. In those early days, when Ṭiḷak came fresh from Brāhman surroundings into the comparative strangeness and isolation of his new Christian environment, Dr. Hume cared for him and cheered him like a father. His broad sympathies and sanity of outlook made a strong appeal to Ṭiḷak, who, if he had chanced to fall in with a guide of narrow or autocratic temperament, would hardly have remained working happily for so long within the organizations of the Christian Church. Ṭiḷak showed his appreciation of Dr. Hume's friendship by desiring in his will that two pictures, one of Dr. Hume and one of himself, should be

hung side by side in the theological seminary, inscribed respectively, "The Foster-Father" and "The Foster-Child."

The American Mission owns extensive property on the eastern edge of Ahmadnagar City, and here Ṭiḷak lived with his family in one of the Mission houses. His wife and son joined him finally, as we have seen, in 1900; and in the next year his only surviving daughter, Tārā, was born. His household, like Nāmdev's,[1] was a household of poetry; for his wife also has made her reputation as a poetess,[2] and for many years Tryambak Ṭhomre, the Bālakavi,[3] was living with him. His son and daughter also have inherited something of their father's talent.

It is impossible in the compass of this small book to give any idea of Ṭiḷak's manifold activities during these twenty years. I shall only in the present chapter mention a few of the chief works which he undertook in connection with the American Marāṭhī Mission, and then in subsequent chapters dwell rather on certain leading aspects of his career.

During most of this period, he was at Ahmadnagar itself, and here his principal work was done in the theological seminary. When he first came to "Nagar,"[4] in 1896, he entered the seminary himself as a student, attending some of the lectures, and for the rest studying privately with the help of the seminary library. But, even whilst a student himself, he was asked to place his excep-

[1] See p. 66.

[2] Her best-known poem, *Patipatni* ("Husband and Wife"), has been published in an English translation, along with others, in *Poems by Indian Women*, in the Heritage of India Series.

[3] I.e., the "Child-Poet"; see below, p. 53.

[4] The common abbreviation of Ahmadnagar.

tional knowledge at the disposal of the other students, and became from the first a teacher. The following are some of the subjects on which he lectured during the many years in which he co-operated with Dr. Hume in the educational work of the seminary: Hinduism and other non-Christian systems, Marāṭhī and Sanskrit, the *Bhagavadgītā* with Śaṅkarāchārya's commentary, Kīrtan-making, the presentation of the Christian faith to the different classes of India, Church History. The intellectual attainments of his pupils were for the most part far below his own, but he had the power of adapting his teaching to their understanding, and was patient in explanations to the humblest.

Besides this teaching in the seminary he had much work to do as an ordained minister. His ordination took place on the 31st of August, 1904, and from that time onwards he frequently preached or led the worship in the Mission church. His preaching, specially at the first, was often difficult for the simpler Christians, who had not his command of Marāṭhī, but the fervour of his spirit, whether in preaching or praying, could not but communicate itself even to the most illiterate. In the performance of public worship he conformed loyally to the traditions of the Church into which he came, but for his own part he loved life and colour and richness of outward beauty in worship better than the austere simplicity of Puritan tradition. I remember his telling me once that he believed a reverent service, with rich and dignified ceremonial, was best calculated to lift the hearts and stimulate the devotion of Indian Christians. Similarly, he believed that full stress should be laid upon the observance of the fasts and feasts of the Church, and he wrote an admirable booklet for Indian Christians upon the meaning and value of the season of Lent.

In the midst of this educational and ministerial work, Ṭiḷak still found time for much social work in the city. He was the friend of all, and did much to promote a better mutual acquaintance amongst all classes in the town. He was always eager to stimulate literary and artistic activities. He conducted for some time a class for the study of Marāṭhī poetry, and also gave much encouragement to the teachers of painting and drawing, helping them to start a club for the improvement of their art.

In the year 1903, plague broke out at Ahmadnagar. Tārā was attacked by it and was removed to the plague hospital. Her father and mother went with her, and, when they saw the need of workers to minister to the patients in their sickness, they volunteered to work there without pay. They stayed there during the epidemic, and saved many lives by their nursing. During a strike of the sweepers they even undertook the sweepers' work with their own hands.

But Ṭiḷak's activities were by no means confined to Ahmadnagar. The more he saw the condition of the village Christians, the more oppressed he became by the sense of their spiritual destitution. Large numbers of poor and ignorant people had been admitted into the Christian Church and given a modicum of Christian teaching, but the provision made for their spiritual nature was sadly inadequate, and the greater part seemed to understand but little of the true meaning of Christianity and exhibited no zeal for Christian service. In October, 1900, Ṭiḷak gave expression to the sense of the need for better organized effort for the spiritual welfare of these village Christians, and offered himself for the work, if the Mission cared to employ him. They agreed to his proposal and set him apart for the work, and for some years after this the

greater part of his time was spent in the villages, endeavouring to cope with a very difficult task.

He began his work among the village Christians in and around Rāhurī; then, in 1901, he was put in charge of the Pārner district, and later he returned to Rāhurī again, where he was in charge during the missionary's absence in 1904, and worked on in the district after his return through 1905 and 1906. Here he tried to instil some genuine Christianity into the Christian community, and, above all, to encourage in them a spirit of self-sacrifice. He himself, by way of example to the rest, gave up the salary he was receiving from the Mission, and continued for two years as a voluntary worker, depending upon the proceeds of his writings and such gifts as he might receive. He writes in 1904: "I have been a volunteer worker in the Mission since last January. I am impressed with the idea that our chief need is *voluntary Christian service* by Indian Christians, with the guidance of Missions, and in perfect co-operation with the paid agency of Missions. I have been enabled to build a house on a splendid site at Rāhurī, which is called 'Christ-Sadan,' i.e. Christ-Home. Here Mrs. Ṭiḷak and I have pledged ourselves to receive the enquirer after truth, the weak and forlorn, and the fallen. Besides this the house provides for a volunteer Christian worker during the time he waits upon the Lord for preparation. Through the influence of this institution, last February a school was started at Kukadvedha in this district by a young volunteer. This school is largely supported by the people, the teacher getting from other sources a nominal help, on an average, of Re. 1-12-0 a month. I am trying to get the people of this village to build their own school and chapel. It will be a very poor mud house; but, if it is erected, it will be a monument of

the people's work for themselves. Another volunteer has gone and taken charge of the Māṅgwāḍā[1] at Undirgaon, where he is working as a preacher and teacher. A convert from the Mahār caste living with Māṅgs in the Ahmadnagar district is a new thing up till now; and we who know the people and their disabilities cannot but kneel down and praise the Lord for the courage He has given this simple volunteer."

Next year he writes: "The work of Christ-Sadan has been steadily progressing. Enquirers from remote parts of India come and stay, and are helped to understand the meaning and necessity of the salvation offered by Christ. Last year five such persons visited the home, each staying on an average four weeks. One hundred and eleven letters were written to answer the questions and doubts of enquirers residing in different parts of India. Christ-Sadan, as usual, is open to the sick, the old and the fallen, and the writer is thankful to God that He has up to now enabled him to help these, giving him very often extra work to do and extra wages for it, and inspiring sometimes brothers and sisters to contribute pecuniarily towards the work."

Village preaching was carried on throughout these years, and, indeed, all through Ṭiḷak's ministry; and the particular method of preaching which he loved—with the help of *bhajans*—was initiated during the Rāhurī days. Most of the early bhajans were written during this period. The first was composed one evening when Ṭiḷak, on a walk with some Christian friends, met a procession of Hindu pilgrims on their way to Paṇḍharpūr, dancing and singing in praise of Viṭhobā, and ready to travel 150 miles on foot in the

[1] Viz. the cluster of houses or hovels occupied by the Māṅgs. The Mahārs, though themselves also outcastes, look down upon the Māṅgs as inferiors. See p. 49.

enthusiasm which their songs and praises inspired. Ṭiḷak saw at once how much inspiration Christians might receive from similar hymns, and composed on the spot the first, and one of the most popular of all, "Christ, the Mother-guru,"[1] which the party sang there and then on the banks of the river Muḷa. From that time onwards the singing of bhajans began to take its place both in Christian worship and Christian preaching.[2]

All through the years in Ahmadnagar town and district Ṭiḷak's spare moments were filled with literary work. Nothing need be said here about his poetry, which is dealt with in a separate chapter, but his prose work also was very extensive, and something may be added here in regard to it.

In 1900 he started editing a vernacular monthly paper, called *Christi* ("The Christian"). It was carried on entirely by himself and Mrs. Ṭiḷak, without pecuniary help from the Mission, and was intended partly to supply useful Christian knowledge to simple Christians and partly to interest non-Christians also. In 1904, with the help of Mr. B. N. Kotak and the Rev. Gaṇpatrāo Navalkar, he started *The Christian Citizen*, an Anglo-vernacular monthly paper, widely circulated among Christians and non-Christians, which ran for three years. It was in this paper that Ṭiḷak began his translation into Marāṭhī of *The Imitation of Christ*, two books of which he composed before his death. In the hot weather of 1905 he was at Keḍgāon, helping Paṇḍitā Ramābāī in her translation of the New Testament. The Paṇḍitā was anxious that Ṭiḷak should stay on there to help further in the work, but he was too much tied by his other duties to make this possible, and, moreover, his

[1] See p. 85. [2] See pp. 57, 58.

conception of the language and style required in the translation differed so widely from the Paṇḍitā's that co-operation would have been difficult.

A paper for children, called *Bālbodhmewā*, was edited at this time by Miss Hattie Bruce under the auspices of the American Marāṭhī Mission. Ṭiḷak began to write for this in 1895, and from that time till 1909, when it came to an end, was a constant contributor to its columns, both in prose and verse. Miss Bruce came, indeed, to regard him as her fellow-editor, rather than merely a contributor, and often more than half the matter would be from his pen.

From the first, too, Ṭiḷak wrote frequently for the *Dnyānodaya*, an English-Marāṭhī weekly, published now by a group of Missions, but in Ṭiḷak's time by the American Mission. It deals mainly with religious topics and is intended primarily for Christians, but especially of recent years has come to reach a wider circle of readers. The paper has an English and a Marāṭhī editor, and the latter post was accepted by Ṭiḷak in 1912, and filled by him from that time onwards until his death. The columns of the paper gave him free scope for the expression of his views, not only on specifically religious questions, but on current matters of political, social and moral interest, on which he could turn the searchlight of Christian principles. Much of his most vigorous writing, both in prose and verse, appeared in the *Dnyānodaya*. The poems have been preserved for the most part, but it might be well worth while to make a collection of some of the prose articles of permanent interest which he contributed to the paper.

All through these years he was reaching a wider fame through his public speaking in many places and through his contributions to the monthly Marāṭhī magazine, *Manorañjan*. He was also a secretary and leading member of a society

for the publication of modern Marāṭhī poetry, known as the *Śāradāprasādan Maṇḍal*. The public recognition of his literary merit reached a fitting climax in May, 1915, when he was appointed president of the Nāṭyasammelan[1]—almost the highest honour that the literary world of Mahārāshṭra can bestow.

[1] Convention of playwrights and actors. Ṭiḷak was asked to preside as an outstanding figure in the literary world, not as a dramatist. He had, however, written a drama called *Śīlam Paramabhūshaṇam* ("Character the Highest Ornament"), which is still performed in high schools.

IV

THE MAN

BEFORE considering the place of Nārāyaṇ Vāman Ṭiḷak as an Indian, a poet and a Christian, it will be well to attempt some portrayal of the man himself as he appeared in his daily life to those who knew him best.

He had a dignified presence and bearing, but with no sense of distance or reserve. If I may speak of my own remembrance of him (he was already over fifty when I came to know him), the main impression his appearance made on me was one of cheerful benevolence. There was a large-hearted tenderness, a warmth of merry affection, in those laughing eyes of his and that kindly smile of greeting. He seemed to radiate sunshine and mirth. Second only to this was the sense of intellectual power conveyed by the large bald forehead, the keen incisive glance, and the alertness of his whole demeanour. The prominent cheekbones above the rather sunken cheeks lent a touch of asceticism to his appearance; and towards the end, when he had let his beard grow long, he looked a veritable *sannyāsī*,[1] whilst never losing his air of frolicsome humanness.

He changed the style of his dress frequently. At times he would wear European clothes—the ordinary black coat

[1] Initiated ascetics fall broadly into two groups, *sannyāsīs* and *sādhus*. Sannyāsīs are devoted to the study of the Vedānta philosophy, and live under very strict rules. Sādhus belong to the sects and obey a less exacting rule.

and trousers and clerical collar of the minister. At other times he took to Indian dress, donning a turban, *bārābandi*,[1] *dhotar*,[2] and sandals. In Rāhurī, in 1906, he started wearing hand-woven, hand-spun clothes. Sometimes, again, specially in his later years, he wore nothing but the simple *kaphinī*, or long robe of the sannyāsī, without, however, colouring it with the saffron dye. But, whatever the style of his dress, it was always simple.

Equally simple was his style of living. He would rise each morning about half-past four or five, and perform his own private devotions. Then he would make tea upon a stove—the only luxury he allowed himself—and serve it to the guests of the household, after which followed a reading from the Bible and the singing of some *bhupālīs*[3] to the accompaniment of *ṭaḷ*[4] and *chipaḷyā*.[5] He had an intense love of Sanskrit and Marāṭhī hymns, and no day began or closed without the singing of bhajans. The food of the household was of the plainest. There were two meals in the day, and the staple diet was *jwārī*, the cheapest cereal of the Deccan, and chillies.[6] Nevertheless, his physical frame was fairly robust, and until his last illness he seldom needed doctors or medicines.

His house was open to all. He was a devoted husband and father, but his domestic affection was free from any touch of exclusiveness, and his hospitality was boundless. No meal was partaken of without the presence of at least

[1] A long cotton coat, folding over the chest, and fastened with *twelve ties*.

[2] A long strip of cloth, wound round the waist, and dropping in folds about the legs.

[3] Morning psalms. [4] Cymbals. [5] Castanets.

[6] I.e. red pepper. Ṭiḷak ate meat for some years, but in later life he became a vegetarian.

one guest. Often he would go to the *dharmśālā*,[1] even in his pre-Christian days, and bring in the blind and the lame to feed with him, to whatever caste they belonged, and give them some clothes to cover their bodies. Once in famine-time, at Ahmadnagar, he took into his house twenty-two boys who could not be kept in the Mission boarding-house; and his wife received them with a mother's love, and kept them for nine months till the famine was over, and this on a salary of eighty rupees!

He felt the sufferings of others intensely. Often in famine times he would stop in the middle of a meal and sit dejected, his own food losing its savour as he thought of the starving thousands. On one occasion, when travelling by train, he found a Brāhman woman, in great pain and distress, being removed from a railway carriage by rough, thoughtless Indian officials. Breaking his journey, to his own inconvenience, he spoke quietly and reassuringly to the woman, telegraphed to her husband to come at once, found and engaged an Indian woman to take care of her at an inn near the station, and saw that her needs were supplied. This drained him of his own slender resources, but he never grudged the money, and went on his way, content that he had his railway ticket to carry him to his destination, and rejoicing at the opportunity of service which had come to him.

He had a hatred of display, and his acts of charity were performed with simplicity and even with secrecy. Once he sold all his property in order to get a Christian gentleman out of financial difficulties, but without allowing him to know who was his benefactor; the man thought, indeed, until his death that a missionary had paid his debts; and Mrs. Ṭiḷak

[1] Public resthouse.

herself was ignorant of how the money had been spent, until the missionary's wife told her.

His own relations were not forgotten. In his later years, after he had resigned his salary, he came to know through a friend that his younger brother, who had been ill for a long time and unable to earn much, was in serious straits. Ṭiḷak had nothing of his own to send him, and was in great distress. The family sat down to their evening meal and he said the grace. Then they waited for him to begin, but he sat silent, and after a moment suddenly got up and went off to his room, where they could hear him sobbing bitterly. His children guessed the cause of his distress, and took him some of the money which they had put aside for their journey back to Bombay after the vacation. He accepted it, reluctantly yet thankfully, but not till he had run to the post office and despatched the amount by wire, would he sit down again to dinner.

Constantly his generosity led him into debt, and his wife, to whom he committed all the management of his household, had the utmost difficulty in supplying their needs. For his own part, he could never bring himself to regard eating and drinking as matters of any serious importance. Once, when they had nothing in the house for the mid-day meal, his wife sent him to the bazaar with the last rupee. He returned with a glass inkstand, which had attracted his fancy; and, when Lakshmībāī abused him roundly, he threw it in chagrin out of the window, and at once sat down, and in two hours composed a poem of some length, which brought them in twenty-five rupees. It was the same to the end. Worldly cares could never disturb him. He had a childlike faith that God would provide. "When I die," he used to say to his wife and children, "I am sure you will find that God has given you money enough for the doctor,

the funeral expenses and a month's food. Then you must work for yourselves." And so it happened, precisely as he had foretold.

Perhaps it was in part this childlike simplicity which made him such a friend of children. Certainly he seemed to have an innate sympathy with them and understanding of them, and they responded to him with an instinctive affection. His son writes of him: "The first recollections that I have of my father are very vivid. It was, perhaps, the year 1897, when he came to see my mother and me. He was staying far away from us at the time. We were with my mother's brothers in Jalālpūr. When we got the news that he was coming, I remember my younger uncle with an axe in his hand, brandishing it before me and saying, 'I shall break your father's head with this axe when he comes in!' I cannot say whether he was in jest or earnest, but it made a deep impression on my mind. I thought my father must be some cruel *Rākshasa*,[1] who would come next morning and drag us to those polluted folk[2] and make us eat mutton and drink wine. The whole day I tried to hide myself in a corner. I was ashamed to show my face to my relatives, specially the younger ones. I felt that I was inferior to the other children, my cousins.

"The day that I dreaded dawned. The cattle had gone out. All was quiet in the house. To my great relief, my uncle who said he would kill my father went off to the fields. My father arrived with a European lady, about nine o'clock, from Nāsik. They were standing in the cowshed, and my mother went out to greet them. I was trying to hide myself, but still wanted to see what was going on. I did not remember having seen my father before. He was a short,

[1] Ogre. [2] Viz., the Christians.

strong man with a beard. I knew only one man who had a beard, and he was a Muhammadan. I was very sorry to have a father with a beard. But there was something which was attractive about him. I think his face was smiling. He did not look cross, like so many of those around me. While I was sitting in a small corner window, trying to sift my impressions about this man whom they called my father, I was called by my mother to come and see him. I went to her, and my father took me up and kissed me. This was a novelty, for no one ever kissed me, and my heart was drawn to him. . . . Though after this I did not see my father till we came to him in Ahmadnagar in 1899, I thought of him through all this time as some being not of this world. I loved him. There was something in him that attracted children; and no other Marāṭhī poet has written so much for children and about children as he has."

His daughter, Tārā, writes thus of her early recollections of her father:

"When I look far back into my life, and try to recall some incidents that happened in my early childhood, the first one that dimly looms out on my life's horizon is one that occurred when I was scarcely seven years old. I was a child of grave and serious temperament. My father's nickname for me was 'the little philosopher.' I loved to sit in a corner and go on musing for hours together, at times on subjects utterly beyond the ken of most children of my years. This brooding habit was doubtless accentuated by the fact that I had no playmates of my own age. My father saw clearly what my need was. One evening, when I had fallen into a mood of this kind, he came to me and said, 'Come along, baby, I want to play with you today!' Delighted though I felt, it seemed to me incredible. My mother, too, was indignant with my father for being so

childish as to leave the important work he was engaged on in order to play with me. So I held back, but he took me out into the garden and began to play. He could understand me as no other person in the world ever could, and not only so but he could understand child-nature in general. There come times in a child's life when it is tired of quiet imitation play—times when it longs to give expression to the joy and life that are within it by dancing and jumping and singing. My father, being a poet, could understand this necessity for self-expression. He took my hands into his own, and did nothing but dance with me for about half an hour. My face was blooming with joy, a joy that knew no bounds. I was convinced from that time that, though I was a child, my father could enter fully into my experiences of joy and sorrow and make them his own, and he was my best friend from that day onwards. My mother was rather vexed with him; and, seeing this, my father went into his study, and after half an hour came out with a poem which he read to her. Of course, I was not big enough to appreciate it, but the general idea of the poem was that every aspect of the universe, physical and spiritual, is an expression of the life and joy that are within it; then, after illustrating this from life, the poet asks his wife to come and dance with him, not at that moment only but all their lives through, singing the song of love in harmony with the music of the world.

"The following incident is an illustration of my father's high regard for the sacredness of personality. We had staying with us the child of one of the friends of the family, who had, unfortunately, some traits of character which seemed quite incorrigible. Also she hadn't a bright intellect; in fact, she seemed to possess no redeeming qualities which could compensate for her defects. All her playmates, as well as the elders who surrounded her, used to point out her

weaknesses, thus discouraging her and making her diffident about herself, none trying to show or draw out any good in her. My father could understand this very well, and saw what was best and most promising in her—the faculty of love and the spirit of service, which always go hand in hand. I remember this child was sitting one day in our drawing-room, with tears in her eyes and a pitiful expression on her face, when my father and myself chanced to enter the room. I noticed the tears in her eyes and asked her what was the matter, but she could not say a word. My father stood there for a while and then went to her, took her into his arms and kissed her, saying to himself[1] something of this kind, 'How we sometimes err in forgetting the sacredness of personality! Even the least among men is precious in the eyes of our Lord, who ever tried to draw out the best in people and turn even their weakness into strength. The timid Peter became steady as a rock. Zacchæus, the grasping miser, became most charitable. The sinful woman began her life anew. Oh, it needs love to draw out love, and in love lie unbounded possibilities of restoration and new life!' I did not fully understand these words at the time, as I was only fourteen or fifteen years of age; but they ring in my ears still, and they come to me whenever I have to deal with persons whose weaknesses I recognize. From that day onwards the child did not fear my father, but showed her love openly."

It was this conviction of the boundless power of love which made him believe much in forgiveness and little in punishment. A supposed convert to Christianity was once staying in his house, and was left in charge there while the family was away for a few days. The man removed two or

[1] He often uttered his thoughts aloud. He once delivered a whole lecture to the barber during his ministrations!

three carts full of things from the house and decamped, leaving the place quite bare. Ṭiḷak followed and found him, forgave him, prayed for him, and returned home—empty-handed.

But he never treated sin lightly. Once when his little daughter brought home a piece of ginger which she had taken off a stall in the bazaar, and showed it to her parents with no consciousness of having committed theft, he took her to her room and, taking a cane, beat himself with it, telling her that he was punishing himself for her guilt. "It was quite a unique method of punishment," she says, "but it was a thousand times severer than any other. Now the idea of touching anybody's possessions, however small, with or without the possessor's knowledge, is so repulsive to me that I cannot bear to entertain the idea for a moment."

Ṭiḷak would never lay upon others a burden which he could bear himself. He disliked the practice of sending photos and reports to America and begging for money for Christian work. He believed in Indian Christians showing the utmost self-sacrifice themselves before appealing for foreign assistance. This spirit of self-help was very characteristic of him. Once he was giving lectures in a certain town, and was due to go on to another place the next day, when suddenly he discovered that he had not sufficient money for his railway fare. He went to a blacksmith's shop, and, after enquiring about the wages, promised to work for him for half the day, and started to blow the bellows. Presently the people of the place, without knowing that he was in need, collected a sum of money for him as a mark of their love and respect. He was obliged to accept it, but he carried out the job he had undertaken, in spite of the protestations of the people (and of the blacksmith himself

on learning his position), working to the last minute of the stipulated time and refusing to take any wages.

He was ready for any manual work and never regarded it as degrading. One day he was cleaning out the buffalo-shed when a visitor who had heard of his fame in America came to see him. "Is Mr. Ṭiḷak at home?" enquired the visitor. "Yes," replied Ṭiḷak, "please be seated for a moment." He went to his room, and, returning in a few minutes washed and in clean clothes, revealed his identity to his astonished guest.

In his early years Ṭiḷak was a man of fiery temper, and even in later life flashes of the old passionateness would occasionally leap out; but he became wonderfully softened as time went on, and such outbursts were rare. By the last years of his life he had entirely overcome this failing.

From the first, too, there was a certain proud aloofness about him, which was one aspect of his spirit of independence, and which made him almost contemptuously indifferent to the opinions of others. He had an immense confidence in himself, a belief that God had given him unusual gifts and called him to do a work beyond the powers of most men. But he was alive to the dangers that this self-confidence brought with it, and was often wrestling with spiritual pride. He wrote warning his son specially against the love of praise, to which he himself had yielded too much; and, if at times he seemed to regard himself with something of St. Paul's "confidence of boasting," he also shared to the full the apostle's utter self-humiliation in presence of the unmerited love of God who had called him to His service.

So, as the years passed, it was his Christian humility which won the victory—the humility which made him beg the editor of his *Abhaṅgāñjali* to omit all praise of him in his introduction, and express in his will the desire that on his

tomb might be inscribed only his bare name and the line (from one of his own songs), "Still very imperfect, Lord; very imperfect am I yet." It is this same lowliness of spirit, wrought out by the blows and buffets of many a stern conflict with self-love, which speaks in the following abhaṅg:[1]

Grant me to give to men what they desire,
And for my portion take what they do slight.
Grant me, my Lord, a mind that doth aspire
To less than it may claim of proper right.
Rather, the lowest place, at all men's feet,
That do thou graciously reserve for me.

This only bounty I would fain entreat,
That Thy Will, O my God, my will may be.
And yet one other boon must Thou bestow;
I name it not, saith Dāsa,[2]—for Thou dost know!

Such was the man, in some of those more obvious characteristics that his friends could see; but beneath all the outward forms of self-expression, quickening his natural virtues and abilities and curbing his natural defects, were those hidden realities of Christian faith and experience of which we must seek to form some estimate in another place.

[1] No. 46 in *Abhaṅgāñjali*. For the meaning of "abhaṅg" see p. 90.

[2] Dāsa, "servant," is the name by which Ṭiḷak invariably calls himself in his abhaṅgs, the traditional custom being to introduce the name in the last couplet.

V

THE INDIAN

AT the time when Ṭiḷak joined the Christian Church, the Christians of Mahārāshṭra, who had been drawn chiefly from the two outcaste communities of Mahārs and Māṅgs, stood almost entirely outside the national life of India. As outcastes they had been considered beyond the pale of Hinduism, and the treatment they had received from their fellow-countrymen had given them little encouragement to pride themselves upon their national heritage or value their national traditions. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they came to look away from India to the West for their emancipation, or that, when large numbers of them believed themselves to have found that emancipation within the shelter of the Christian Church, they should feel drawn towards the missionaries, who represented to them that Church, and endeavour to conform themselves in all respects to their ideas and ways. It is easy for us in these days to deplore the fact that the early missionaries allowed this process of denationalization to go on, and even unintentionally encouraged it; but we must remember that the National Movement, which has transformed the whole of the Eastern world, was then unborn, and that the importance of rearing in India an indigenous Church, truly Indian in character—a truism to us today—had not then come to be understood.

But, distribute the blame as we will, the fact remains that the Indian Christian Church in Mahārāshṭra, thirty years ago, had the appearance of being a foreign Church. It lived on foreign money. It dressed in foreign clothes. It worshipped in foreign buildings, and sang foreign music. It thought in foreign ways, and had even a debased language of its own, known as Christian Marāṭhī. These things are fast changing today, and to no one is the change due so much as to Nārāyaṇ Ṭiḷak.

We have seen above that in his schooldays at Nāsik, Ṭiḷak developed an ardent patriotism; and this remained with him all his life through, deepening as the years went on. "I don't think I have loved my own parents, children, friends, even myself, as much as I love my country"—so he wrote in his will.

This love for India was, as we have seen, one of the principal influences leading to his acceptance of the Christian faith; and it is, therefore, only natural that after he became a Christian it should be increased rather than diminished. Indeed, whilst there was nothing exclusive in his patriotism, he could never understand how a Christian could be other than a fervent lover of his country. He was totally free from racial prejudice; his vision of a universal brotherhood of love was always his primary inspiration; but this in no way conflicted for him with an intense and particular love for the land in which God had given him birth.

How completely his Christian faith seemed only to inspire him the more with the desire to give his all for India may be seen from the poem, *My Motherland*, which I give in his own rough but vivid English rendering:

Bran shall I eat and rags shall I wear for the sake of thy

love, my Motherland, and I shall throw in the dust all that passes for glory and happiness.

Sooner or later my soul must quit this mortal house and go, but has death power to take me away from thee? Thou knowest he has not. To be born of thee—how blessed is the privilege. Who is there to rob me of it? Is there any robber so daring? Time? Death? No, none.

My body will I sacrifice, my life will I lay down in thy service, my noble land. Some will laugh and some will cry at this ecstasy of love. But I heed them not. Born to fulfil my relationship as a son to thee, I will fulfil it. May God help me.

Our wealth, our good name, our wisdom thou covetest not; it is we, we alone, whom thou deemest the life of thy life. O thou loving Mother, accept then this my own self which I offer to thee, howsoever mean the offering may be. In this I do nothing more than follow my Master Jesus Christ, my Friend, thy Friend, the Friend of all.

May the Almighty help me to be a disciple like this Master, exactly and fully like Him and not a whit less, and to do for thee, my Motherland, and for the world, what He did. Then I, whom thy eyes will see mortified, slain, dead, shall be serving thee for ages—how many you or I do not know.

Ṭiḷak felt that patriotism could transcend the differences of religion or sect, and be a powerful bond for uniting a divided India. "It will be a blessed day for India," he used to say, "when every Indian, of whatever school, sect, or religion he be, unites with others in the common service of the Motherland, under the inspiration of patriotism. There is only one thing that will unite Christians, Musalmans, Parsees, and Hindus, with their thousand and one castes, and that is the love of country."

The sincerity of Ṭiḷak's own patriotism, which men could not but recognize, gradually broke down the estrangement from his non-Christian friends which his acceptance of the Christian faith had naturally created at first. After his

baptism, as we have already seen, he had to undergo considerable persecution, and for some years he was subject to that social ostracism which a convert to Christianity from the higher castes in India has to face. But it was overcome in his case more quickly than usual. Men saw that his new religion had not denationalized him; he was an Indian of the Indians every bit as much as before, and they gave him in time the right hand of fellowship. His brother, Sakhārām, and N. R. Peṇḍse, his brother-in-law, who had tried hard to persuade him to return to the Hindu fold, became reconciled to him during these Ahmadnagar days. Bāl Gangādhar Ṭiḷak, with whom he had considerable intercourse in earlier days, he saw less after his conversion; but the Nationalist leader never forgot him, and he sent him later a presentation copy of *Gītārahasya*, the famous commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* which he wrote during his six years' imprisonment. In Ahmadnagar itself he was the friend of all. The pleaders and other Brāhmans of the place gladly received him into their houses, and many were the hours of friendly controversy and religious discussion that he spent with them. One able Brāhman, Vināyak Vishṇu Joshī, was particularly scornful at first of the claims of the Christian religion to surpass Hindu teaching. They agreed to study the *Bhagavadgītā* together, and the result of those hours of intercourse and discussion was that Joshī became a convinced Christian and was baptized by Ṭiḷak.

There can be no doubt that one of the chief reasons which secured Ṭiḷak a place in the affections and respect of his fellow-countrymen, besides the genuineness of his patriotism, was his reputation as a poet. During the years at Ahmadnagar his poems were appearing frequently in the Marāṭhī monthly magazine, *Manorañjan*, the noble editor of which, Kāshīnāth Ragunāth Mitra, was his close

friend. With three of the band of modern Marāṭhī poets Ṭiḷak was brought into intimate association. The first was Keśavasut, who may dispute with Ṭiḷak the claim to be considered the founder of the modern school of Marāṭhī poetry.[1] Keśavasut was not at first a particularly religious man. Indeed, he had in some quarters the reputation of being an atheist. But his brother has declared that, owing to Ṭiḷak's influence, he was at one time on the point of becoming a Christian. Another, of great musical as well as poetical gifts, was Dattātreya Kondo Ghate, generally known as "Datta," who died young. It is said that he, too, was nearly a Christian.[2] The third, and in some ways the most remarkable, was Tryambak Bāpujī Ṭhomre, who was known as the Bālakavi, or Child-Poet, because of the early age at which he began to write. When he was only fourteen years old, the poetry that he composed and a speech that he made attracted so much attention that Ṭiḷak was asked to allow Ṭhomre to live and study with him, and gladly consented. For about ten years Ṭhomre was with him, provision being made for his meals with a Brāhman family. I knew Ṭhomre intimately, and he was one of the most lovable men that I have ever met. He was not outwardly a Christian. He had studied the Bible deeply, and possessed a knowledge of of it which would put most Christians to shame. But his was not the mind which would venture precipitately along untried paths: he must test each step of the way; and to the acceptance of Christian beliefs there remained for him to the end certain obstacles, which he felt had not been satisfactorily cleared away. Nevertheless, in the range and

[1] See p. 68 f.

[2] Owing to this friendship of Datta with Ṭiḷak, much of the former's poetry was published in the *Bālbodhmewā* of the American Marāṭhī Mission.

delicacy of his spiritual intuition, in his humility and gentleness, and in his selfless consideration for others, he was one of the most Christlike Indians it has been my privilege to know; and I shall never forget the joy with which he used to welcome in our discussions the emergence of new points of resemblance between his own beliefs and the position which I held. Ṭiḷak loved him dearly, and told me once that Ṭhomre could interpret his poems to me better than he himself could. Certainly the reading of Ṭiḷak's and other Marāṭhī poetry with the Bālakavi was an intellectual banquet for which I still often hunger. Ṭhomre on his part was devoted to his teacher, and looked on Mrs. Ṭiḷak as his second mother. He was killed in an accident, while still quite young, not many years before Ṭiḷak's death.

The wealth of affection which he received from his non-Christian friends, and the respect which they came to show for his faith and for the Master he served, were to Ṭiḷak a source of profound happiness and wonder, and deepened yet more his love for a country which could show so generous a spirit. In one of his later abhaṅgs[1] he wrote:

Thrice blessed is thy womb, my Motherland,
Whence mighty ṛishis, saints and sages spring!
A Christian I, yet here none taunteth me,
Nor buffeteth with angry questioning.
I meet and greet them, and with love embrace:
None saith, "Thou dost pollute us by thy sin!"
My Guru they delight to venerate;
They say, "He is our brother and our kin."
Let no man fancy that I idly prate;
Such kindness greets me always, everywhere.
Saith Dāsa, O thou peerless Mother mine!
Thy generous sons thy generous heart declare.

Whilst Ṭiḷak was thus, on the one hand, drawing his

[1] No. 189

fellow-countrymen nearer to the Christian community by the bands of personal friendship with himself, he was also drawing Indian Christians nearer to their fellow-countrymen by his presence and work amongst them.

Christians could not come in contact with him in daily life, or listen to his teaching in the classroom, without catching something of his burning patriotism. Few things pained him more than the discovery that a Christian was lacking in such patrotism. On one occasion two Indian students of the theological seminary were dining with him, and in the course of conversation one of the students indulged in some offensive criticisms of India and Indians. Ṭiḷak, unable to endure it, left the table hurriedly, and presently composed a poem beginning with the lines:

> When as I heard men slander thee, Mother, it grieved me so,
> For very rage I thought my soul would burst her bars and go!

One of the ways in which Ṭiḷak helped to make his fellow Christians more truly Indian was by teaching them to study and love the older Marāṭhī literature, specially the devotional poetry of Dnyāneshwar,[1] Nāmdev and Tukārām, on which he constantly fed his spirit. He believed that the surest way of being brought near to the soul of a people was to study their poetry. "Philosophy," he said in one of his lectures, "gives us the way of a people's beliefs, history the way of their peculiar civic and economic condition, but it is their poetry and music which give us an insight into their hearts. To have ability to understand a people's poetry is to have ability to know their hearts, to know the spirit that underlies their activities. Do you care

[1] I.e. Jñāneśvara.

to know the real heart of the Hindus? Then begin to care to know what their poets have said and are saying. I myself am never satisfied with the study of a people unless I have studied to some extent their poetry and music. I am, therefore, thankful to be given this opportunity to give you a glimpse of Marāṭhī poetry, that you may know your fellow-countrymen in the Marāṭhā country better."

He believed, moreover, that there was much in this older literature which Christians could cherish and build on. His own early spiritual aspirations had been nurtured upon it. It was "over the bridge of Tukārām's verse," he once declared, that he came to Christ. The poetry of the Marāṭhā saints, instinct with the emotion of loving devotion to God and longing for His presence (even though God might be worshipped under the unsatisfying emblem of Viṭhobā's black image at Paṇḍharpūr) was, he believed, a *praeparatio evangelica* for the Christian Gospel. "We esteem all the world's saints," he wrote, "as prophets of God, and the sayings of the Hindu saints from our first Old Testament. By their help our Lord has become more and more clear, more and more near to us, and we become convinced of the truth of the proverb, 'Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas.'"[1] Further, "Since I am an Indian, it is natural that I should take pride in our Indian literature, in our Indian mahātmās. But do not suppose it is simply out of pride that I sing their praises. Tukārām and Jñāneśvara were once my gurus; and, even though I am not now their disciple, I give them grateful honour as my gurus of former days. The traditional way of union with the Supreme through *bhakti*,[2] which Hindu mystics have con-

[1] "Socrates is our friend, Plato our friend, but the greatest of friends is Truth."

[2] Loving devotion.

ceived and Hindu devotees experienced, may be summed up in the four words, *samīpatā*, *salokatā*, *sarūpatā*, and *sayujytā*;[1] this has helped me to enter into the meaning of that series of Christ's sayings—'Come after Me,' 'Take My yoke upon you,' 'Become like unto Me,' 'Abide in Me.'"

In a future chapter we shall have occasion to consider in more detail how far specifically Indian conceptions, such as those of *yoga* and bhakti, were woven into the texture of Ṭiḷak's Christianity. We shall also see in the last chapter how the idea of *sannyās*, or renunciation, as constituting the devotee's highest path of life, laid its spell upon him towards the end of his life, and led him to abandon Mission service and live the life of a sannyāsī.

But undoubtedly Ṭiḷak's greatest contribution towards the "naturalization" of the Christian Church in India lay in that treasury of glorious devotional lyrics with which he enriched her. Until he began to pour forth his bhajans it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Marāṭhī-speaking Christians had no outlet for the pouring out of the heart's devotion in the worship of God. If music and hymn-singing play no small part in a Western service for the quickening of devotion and the offering of praise, in India their place is more central still. At the call of the guitar's twang and the cymbal's clash and the drum's rhythmic beat the soul leaps up, ready for the high emprise. As the familiar melody moves on and the voices expand into a great flood of sound, earth is left behind, its cares forgotten, its joys despised. The body sways rhythmically to the music; the spirit soars up and sings at heaven's gate. The emotion changes with the mood of the music. Now it is a song of worship and adoration; now a passionate yearning for the Presence;

[1] Nearness, association, likeness, "yokedness" or union.

now a transport of loving devotion; now the peace of a calm self-surrender to the divine Lover. This to the Indian is worship, and from this the Indian Christian of Mahārāshṭra was cut off, till Ṭiḷak came. There were, indeed, a few Christian lyrics, but they were of little poetic merit. For the rest, the devotion of the Indian soul had to feed itself upon English hymns, translated into doggerel Marāṭhī, which retained the metre of the English, so that they could be sung (perhaps with the help of a harmonium) to the English tunes.

Now all this is changed, and the Christian Church in Mahārāshṭra possesses a collection of Christian psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which for literary merit and wealth of spiritual conception can have few rivals in India. Any congregation which still incurs the charge of maintaining a Westernized form of worship has only itself to blame; for the wealth of Christian poetry which Ṭiḷak has left behind him includes, not only three or four hundred original hymns of his own, but also renderings into Marāṭhī poetry of some of the best English hymns, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," and Addison's "The stately firmament on high," and also of some of the Psalms, and of the ancient canticles of the Church, such as the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in Excelsis*.

These beautiful lyrics of Ṭiḷak's, knit to the familiar melodies of Mahārāshṭra, may now be heard all over the countryside; and it is impossible to estimate the effect which they have had, not only in kindling the religious emotions of the Christians, but also in elevating their language and cleansing it of the Anglicisms and crudities by which it had been debased.

A kindred debt which the Christian Church owes to Ṭiḷak is his encouragement of the kīrtan as a means of preaching

to non-Christians, and of edification for Christians also. The kīrtan is a form of religious service, conducted by a single leader with a small choir assisting him, in which hymns in praise of God alternate with the spoken description of His doings, usually of His doings when incarnate in human form. This form of service is said to have been orginated, or at least to have been popularized, by the poet Nāmdev, in the fourteenth century. "A real kīrtan," Ṭiḷak said, "ought to be a happy combination of music, poetry, eloquence, and humour, all contributing to drive home religious truth." Ṭiḷak himself was a master of this form of preaching, and men would sit spell-bound through long hours of the night whilst he told them the story of the life of Christ, and sang and even danced in an ecstasy of devotion to the clat of the castanets; and, thanks to his example, and with the help of his songs, the kīrtan has now won a wide popularity in the Christian Church in the Marāṭhī country.

It was natural that Ṭiḷak, conscious of India's spiritual wealth and profoundly convinced of the importance of Indian Christianity expressing itself in forms congenial to the Indian spirit, should wish to see the Church in India free to fashion for herself these forms, and should chafe at anything which savoured of the imposition of alien rites and customs from the West. He wrote:[1]

> Think not of India as of a child's buffoonery or a jester's tricks and airs;
> Here have sprung mighty heroes of faith, at whom the world trembles.
> Here have sprung sages that were lords of yoga,[2] whose light abides unto this day,

[1] No. 168 in *Abhaṅgāñjali*.

[2] I.e. Masters of the life of mystic union with God.

Men whose faith was their very life, their all, and the world their home.

Yes, even here such kingly saints were born, and in the hearts of all men they shone resplendent.

What boots it to bring here a masquerade of strange disguises and of foreign airs?

All that you gain you'll squander in the end, and about your neck ignominy shall lay her garland.

Saith Dāsa, Here be the Lord Jesus Christ set up on high—that is our need alway!

He felt strongly, specially towards the end of his life, that the Indian Church was fast reaching a point at which it could work out its own salvation and think out its own expression of Christian doctrine and Christian life. It was not that he wished to get rid of all missionaries from the West, for he worked with them with the utmost loyalty and love. But he considered (and most missionaries would agree with him) that their relation to the Indian Christians should no longer be that of father and child, but rather that of brothers. He once wrote:

You have set up for yourselves a kingdom of slaves; do not call it a Kingdom of God.

We dance as puppets while you hold the strings; how long shall this buffoonery endure?

And again:[1]

Pack up your baggage quick and get you gone,
All whom the land of India pleaseth not!
Think not that money or authority
Can save us;—'tis a false and vain conceit!
Fathers and godlings—we desire not these;
Come, let us knit the bonds of brotherhood!
Saith Dāsa, Be the time that's past forgot,
And a new mind put on in this new day!

[1] Abhaṅg No. 160.

None would have rejoiced more sincerely than he at the rapid strides which the Indian Church is making today towards independence of Western help and the shouldering of its own burden.

A word must be said at the conclusion of this chapter about the attitude of Ṭiḷak towards the political questions of his day. Our reason for giving but a small place to this matter is that Nārāyaṇ Tiḷak, unlike Bāl Gangādhar Ṭiḷak, was never a politician, nor was he greatly concerned with questions of politics. The cause of this appears in a letter to his son, written towards the close of his life. "I believe that, unless India follows Jesus Christ, all her efforts to improve her status will ultimately fail. I am exclusively and wholly a preacher of Jesus and Him crucified. I repent to have wasted much of my life in trying to serve my country by taking part in all her different activities. Jesus was a patriot and wished to serve His country, and He tried to lay for its future structure the foundation of the Kingdom of God. Without that foundation civilization may prove a way to utter destruction, materially, as in the case of Belgium, or morally, as in the case of Germany."

Nevertheless, as the above letter indicates, he did in fact share to some extent in public activities. He was a member of the Home Rule League, and longed eagerly for the day when India would be united and free. Nevertheless, he believed that India could best fulfil her destiny within the British Empire, and he had no sympathy with the extremer politicians who desired Home Rule immediately. What chiefly gave him pause was his intimate association with the depressed classes, and his anxiety—which he found that they shared—as to what their status might come to be if complete *swarāj* were granted before the country were socially and morally prepared for it. He would have

echoed heartily Mahātmā Gāndhī's dictum, that one of the essential pre-requisites for Home Rule is the removal of untouchability.

When the War came, he was warmly in sympathy with the ideals for which he believed Britain to be fighting, and urged his fellow-countrymen to throw themselves heartily into the support of the Empire. Towards the close of the War, (if I may here anticipate what chronologically should fall within the last chapter) in June and July, 1918, he contributed to the *Times of India* two articles, in which he urged upon Indian Home Rulers that the truest interests of their country demanded their standing by Britain in her struggle, and that the schemes for immediate independence which advanced politicians were pressing were premature, and might well be disastrous. " I do not wish to be understood to mean that India, imbued as it is with new life and the spirit of progress, does not look for any form of self-government. What is certain, however, is that the vast bulk of the Indian people do not want the Home Rule proposed by these extremists. The main question yet to be determined is: Exactly what form of representative government will be beneficial to India? Should there be undue haste in deciding so vast and intricate a problem, or should a premature scheme be launched on India, it will be the greatest catastrophe conceivable. The whole history of India, ancient and modern, teaches a lesson it would be a tragic error, a treasonable blunder, to forget, that it is much more difficult to use, improve and make permanent any gain than first of all to carry it into effect. India wants nothing done prematurely. It certainly does not want to snatch for itself any public boons that are merely unripe fruit. Such a course would be disastrous to the very cause every patriot has at heart. That form of responsible

government which will make us capable of defending the rights and privileges of each Indian community, which will be strong enough to resist any one community if in any way it seeks to obstruct the progress of any other community, which will wisely and impartially administer justice in each and every case, and, above all, will so educate all the communities of the Indian people as to enable them to form a strong unit of their own, qualified in the true sense of the word to manage their own affairs—such, and such only, is the form of self-government which India needs and for which India is asking."

The articles earned him a special letter of thanks from the Governor of Bombay, and a violent attack from the Poona Nationalist paper, *The Mahratta*, which abused him as a "black sheep" of the Home Rule fold. To the latter he made no reply, and several weeks' silence "turned his greatest critics into his greatest friends."

Mr. Gāndhī's Non-Co-operation movement had not begun at the time when Ṭiḷak died, and the attitude of the Christian community towards the Mahātmā in 1918 was far less friendly than it is today, when he has been described by a President of the Indian Christian Conference as "the greatest Indian Christian." It is, therefore, impossible to say what attitude Ṭiḷak would have taken up towards the more recent political developments, and it would be unfair to judge of this by his utterances of earlier days; but the *Satyāgraha*[1] campaign, which was Mr. Gāndhī's first attempt to apply to India the Passive Resistance which had proved so successful in South Africa, was started a few months before Ṭiḷak's death; and one of the last things Ṭiḷak did, two or three days before the end, was to dictate a last

[1] Lit., steadfast hold of the truth.

message to his countrymen upon the true method of satyāgraha as employed by "the greatest *Satyāgrahī* in history, Jesus of Nazareth." He warmly admired Mahātmā Gāndhī, whom he described as "in every sense truly worthy of the title Mahātmā; but he considered that he was gravely mistaken in "striving to make satyāgraha popular in India, where extremists, anarchists and other mischief-makers are only too eager to abuse so lofty an idea."

This chapter cannot close better than with the words of Sir Nārāyaṇ Chandāvarkar, the first President of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, spoken of Tiḷak at a public meeting in Bombay shortly after his death. "He was a great Christian, following truly in his Master's footsteps. To the great advantage of India's political life he has rescued for us the true meaning of that word of Christ: 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' A gross misinterpretation of that makes Christ to mean: 'I and My followers must go entirely our own way, a different way from the politicians and the people.' That terse, immortal, life-giving sentence means that all our political, civic, and social life is to be ennobled by the presence of the best men in it, for you can neither divide the individual nor society into different parts: they are ever one and undivided. Christ meant: Let government do its duty in preserving peace and order, and let the individual help the government in this important task, and thus 'render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' But not only so. We are to 'render unto God the things that are God's,' for, after all, the government is meant to facilitate our way to God. Governments exist for the purpose of propagating liberty, the liberty of the man who feels there is no true freedom apart from uprightness. Such was Ṭiḷak. Not a poet lost to other-worldliness, but one

whose message was health-giving and life-imparting to the people of his own day. He sang, he lived, he died in a way worthy of a true Christian. He beckons to his countrymen to obey the voice of God, in order that they may become a truly great people."

VI

THE POET

THE closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of a great revival of Marāṭhī poetry, a revival which has still by no means spent itself, though the great poets who inaugurated it have all passed away.

The poetry of Mahārāshṭra is possessed of a great tradition. It has its source far back in the latter part of the thirteenth century, when Jñāneśvara, the contemporary of Dante, in language as archaic as Chaucer's English, clothed the abstract principles of the Vedānta philosophy in the charm and colour of living verse. A century later[1] followed Nāmdev, the *Kutumb-kavi*, (Family Poet) as he is called from the fact that all the members of his family, even his maidservant, composed poetry. Ṭiḷak says of his style that it proves how there is no beauty like the beauty of simplicity, and also declares that "Nāmdev is the first Marāṭhī poet who denounces idolatry with real force." The fifteenth century produced no poet of distinction in Mahārāshṭra; but the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, which witnessed the great awakening of the Marāṭhā spirit in its resolve to rid itself of the Muhammadan yoke, gave birth also to a trio of poet-saints: Eknāth, the Brāhman ascetic and devotee; Rāmdās, likewise a Brāhman, the guru of Shivājī and inspirer with him of the national spirit; and

[1] Tradition makes Nāmdev the contemporary of Jñāneśarva, but the difference of style makes this extremely improbable.

Tukārām, the poet of the people, pouring out his heart's devotion to his beloved Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpūr in ceaseless abhaṅgs, whose exquisite music has resounded through Mahārāshṭra ever since he sang them. No other Marāṭhī poets can be placed quite in the company of these three. Vāman Paṇḍit, their contemporary, is indeed greatly admired, but there is an artificiality about his verse and a bondage to Sanskrit forms which prevent it from being ranked with their simple and spontaneous Marāṭhī, and the same is true, to an even greater extent, of the over-rated Moropant of the eighteenth century. Ṭiḷak's own view was, that of the poets of the period of the Marāṭhā supremacy the greatest was not Moropant but Śrīdhara; and he admired also the simplicity of Mahīpati. But with the eighteenth century the well of poetic inspiration was failing, and by its close had run dry. The great revival of Marāṭhī poetry at the end of the nineteenth century was much more than a re-discovery of the old springs of inspiration; it was the welling up of a new fount. Minor poets, or versifiers, had been plodding along the beaten tracks for a century and more, with the uninspired heaviness of imitators. The men of the new movement had all the verve and exultation of pioneers. India had entered now upon a new age of her history, and not least of the fresh influences which had stirred to its depth her whole intellectual life was the opening-up to her men of education of the treasure-house of English literature. Shakespeare and Milton, Byron and Shelley, Wordsworth and Tennyson, were being widely read and admired. A new spirit was passing over the land, like the breath of open country and of springtime which swept over Europe at the Renaissance. Professor Patvardhan, the Principal of Fergusson College, Poona, in an article upon Ṭiḷak's poetry, has given an admirable description of the

new movement. He writes: "As the Lake Poets in English literature positively and courageously struck out a new path and emancipated English poetry from the rigid fetters of a school that cultivated dignity of diction and correctness of language, and emphasized elegance of form at the expense of thought and feeling—at the expense, that is, of the soul of poetry—the new school of Marāṭhī poets hoisted a flag of revolt against the eighteenth-century standards of Marāṭhī poetry, sedulously perfected by Moropant and his school, and affectionately cherished and cultivated by Marāṭhī men of letters in the first three-quarters of the last century. In the fifties, sixties, and seventies of the nineteenth century it was regarded as an enviable achievement if one could faultlessly imitate the subtle effects of the long and sustained rhymes of Moropant. Polished elegance of language and harmonies of sound, when combined with clever intellectual surprises, passed for the highest poetry before the advent of Ṭiḷak, Keśavasut, and their school. Mr. Ṭiḷak was among the first to break away from the trodden path and introduce innovations, both as regards metre and conception. He was one of those who carried into effect the healthy influence of the Wordsworthian school, who led Marāṭhī poetry out of doors and taught her to realize the free, open and bracing air of Nature, lured her out of the melancholy precincts of asceticism, coaxed her into discarding the yellow robes of renunciation, and persuaded her to enter with an eager, bounding heart into the world of rainbow hues and sunny splendour. The New School of Marāṭhī poetry has emerged from the cramping conception that restricted the field of poetry to matters of piety and devotion, to matters of other-worldly interest, and has taught poetry to live and move and have her being in this world, in the realities of material life. The waving grasses and smiling flowers of the field, the danc-

ing ears of corn and the nodding heads of trees, the rolling piles of clouds and sparkling drops of dew; these came to be discovered anew, and the might and mystery of the known world lent a fullness and wealth to the new song never before dreamt of. Mr. Ṭiḷak shares the credit with Keśavasut, though the latter, who is somewhat junior to the former, was the bolder and hardier innovator. The school to which they belonged brought poetry down from heaven to this world, or rather brought the poetic muse to find her delightful abode as much on earth as beyond it. Like the lark of Wordsworth, Marāṭhī poetry in their hands came to be true both to heaven and home."[1]

The twin pioneers of this new school of poetry, as Professor Patvardhan here indicates, were Ṭiḷak and Keśavasut. There is no need to discuss their relative merits or attempt to discover which was the greater genius. Ṭiḷak himself would have been the first to deprecate such suggestion of rivalry, for the two men were on terms of intimate friendship with one another, and after Keśavasut's death Ṭiḷak bore generous testimony to the debt he owed him. It is sufficient that either man played his part in the new movement, and the parts were different. Ṭiḷak was writing poetry before Keśavasut, and also outlived him, so it is natural that the bulk of his achievement should be greater; and this is specially marked in the case of longer poems, of which Keśavasut wrote but few. Ṭiḷak's great glory is his poetry of religious devotion. Keśavasut was not a particularly religious man, and will be famous rather for his stirring calls to social reforms and the adventures of a new age. Again, Keśavasut was, as Professor Patvardhan has said, "a bolder and hardier innovator." His verse is

[1] In the *Indian Interpreter* for October, 1919

coloured largely by Western thought and Western language, making it sometimes difficult to those unacquainted with Western literature. Ṭiḷak, to quote again from the same source, was "a harmonious blend of the new and the old. In him the old still lingered, while the new vigorously grew. . . . Mr. Ṭiḷak's verse does not sound strange and new and unfamiliar; does not come as an innovation, even when the subject is new and the thought uncommon." Perhaps it will not be altogether misleading to say that, whilst Keśavasut has often been compared with Shelley, Ṭiḷak may be called the Wordsworth of Mahārāshṭra. Wordsworth was his own favourite English poet; and Ṭiḷak certainly resembles him in the simplicity of his diction and dislike of artifice, in his love of children and of poetry about them, and in his love of flowers, trees, hills and valleys, and the whole world of Nature, which for him was replete with spiritual meaning, a reflection of the Uncreated Beauty at the heart of it.[1]

Ṭiḷak cherished always a supremely high ideal of his art. To him it was not so much a creation of his own brain as an inflatus of the Divine Spirit, a thing bestowed by God. When this inspiration was lacking he could produce nothing. Peaceful surroundings and beauty of natural scenery helped him much. There was a garden at Ahmadnagar, beyond the dust and noise of the city, which belonged to a friend of his. It was thickly planted with shady trees and flower-

[1] Vināyak Janārdan Karandīkar ought, perhaps, to be ranked along with Ṭiḷak and Keśavasut as a pioneer of the New School. Keśavasut used to call him, both in respect of his character and the style of his poetry, the Byron of Mahārāshṭra. Govindāgraz has too much of the artificiality of the eighteenth century to be a typical modern, and the Thomre Bālakavi, though his verse will rank with the best, was a younger man and largely influenced by Ṭiḷak.

ing shrubs, and, specially in the days of heat formed an ideal refuge for him. Here he used to retire, when he could get away from the stress of his work in the city, for some quiet hours or days of meditation and writing; and no recollection is pleasanter to me than that of joining him there, in the late afternoon of summer days, to read his poetry with him and listen to his keen talk. There we have sat absorbed, till the sun sank at the end of a long day, and the orange and crimson flashed out through the palm trees, and I had to beat a hurried and reluctant retreat through the quickly-gathering darkness. In such spots, or again among the glories of Mahableshwar or Pāñchgaṇi in the Western Ghats, the spirit would quickly move him; and when the inspiration came upon him he could compose with extraordinary rapidity. His poem, *The Flower of the Forest*, which occupies nineteen pages as printed, was composed in three days during walks at Mahableshwar. At a meeting of the Prārthanā Samāj, in Bombay, he once delivered a complete address in verse, both metres and words suggesting themselves to him on the spur of the moment. His longest poem, *Suśīlā*, was composed whilst ministering to his sick wife and singing her to sleep. Indeed, there was no telling when the mood would seize him and when it would desert him. The moments of inspiration possessed for him both the sacredness of a divine revelation and the unstudied simplicity and playfulness of natural beauty. This is nowhere better expressed than in *The Poet's Request*, at the beginning of the first volume of his collected poems:

> Reader, behold my heart laid bare,
> And freely plant thy dagger there;
> Yet on these poems—ah! forbear—
> Though ne'er so soft the hand thou place,
> Nor tricked with ne'er so deft a grace,

That lightest touch
Is yet too much!
Dearer were death to poet heart
Then profanation of his art.

For mark thee well; these songs I sing,
Nor mine nor thine their secret spring;
Bethink thee at whose quickening
These fires upstart
Within my heart;
Aye, in that Presence trembling stand,
Then, if thou dar'st, stretch forth thy hand.

See on those clouds how sunset throws
Chance tints, nor plan nor order knows,—
Thence all their charm. Yon rambling rose
Counts not her flowers,
But in random showers
Droops and trails them with ne'er a thought!
Ever such is true Beauty's sport.

Worship or scoff! yet draw not nigh
This sacred revel of poesy!
See, with clasped hands, with suppliant sigh
I beg, I pray,
Conjure thee—nay,
Prone in the dust, thy feet I kiss—
Touch not my songs! I ask but this!

Ṭiḷak's poetical activity may be divided roughly into four periods. The first is the period preceding his change of faith, that is, down to the year 1895. During these years he was a diligent student of Sanskrit poetry, and the poems of this time bear the mark of it. The second period is from 1895 to 1900, when he became known as the poet of flowers and children, from the number of poems he composed on these themes. The third reaches down to the end of 1912, and comprises a great output of both secular and devotional poetry—on the secular side, poems of home life and love, poems of Nature and national and patriotic

songs; and on the devotional side, most of the Christian hymns collected together in the *Bhajan Saṅgraha*. The fourth period covers the last six years of his life, when he wrote almost entirely religious poetry, and specially the first book of the *Christāyan* (the only book he completed out of eleven) and most of the abhaṅgs in *Abhaṅgāñjali*, published just after his death. These periods overlap to a considerable extent, but they do roughly indicate the dominant character of the successive stages of his writings.

It is impossible within the scope of a small book to give a detailed critique of Ṭiḷak's poetry, nor have I the capacity for such a task. I can only here give the briefest appreciation, quoting also that of others more competent than myself, of some of the principal classes of his writings.

The literary activity of his early years was of a varied character. He wrote not only in verse but in prose also. A small novel, *Vīrā Kanyā* ("The Warrior Maid"), belongs to these early days, and two dramas, *Ānandrāo* and *Gorakshaṇā*, the latter of which was particularly popular in Nāgpur. Of the poetry he composed, a good deal was in Sanskrit at this period, and that which was in Marāṭhī bears the clear impress of his Sanskrit scholarship. Yet at the same time he was devouring English poetry with avidity, and new ideas were shaping themselves rapidly in his mind. As early as 1886 he translated Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* into Marāṭhī verse, and in the next year appeared the poem, *My Wife*, in which the newer ideals of conjugal love and the position of women already showed themselves. The poem, *A Father's Tears*, written after the death of his first son, gave another tender picture of family affection, and is the forerunner of the longer poem of the same name, written about twenty years later, and published in the collected works. Ṭiḷak started a small monthly maga-

zine, called *Kāvyakusumāñjali*, devoted entirely to Marāṭhī poetry; it was the first of its kind, but ran only for about a year. In the early nineties Keśavasut, Datta, and Vināyak were beginning to write, and soon the stream of the new poetry was in full flood. The barriers of Sanskrit pedantry and bondage to outward forms were swept away before it. The men of Mahārāshṭra found to their amazement that their national literature had passed through a new birth, and that poetry could speak to them in the familiar language of their homes, and illumine with a new beauty the actual world in which they lived.

It was in the last five years of the century that Ṭiḷak wrote most, though by no means all, of his poems about children and flowers. The two were linked together in his mind, for he loved both dearly for their simplicity and purity, and felt that they had a natural kinship. Many of his children's poems appeared in the *Bālbodhmewā*. Viewed as poems for children, they are perhaps, with some exceptions, rather difficult in language or a little philosophic in conception; but as discerning pictures of child-nature and child-life they are admirable. It is impossible to preserve in translation the lilt and music of the original, but here is an attempt to render at least the simplicity of what is perhaps the finest of these child-poems, the one called *My Tāī*:[1]

Tāī, thou art my floweret bright,
My planet beauteous in the night;
Thou the jewel on my brow,
And my little birdie thou!
Yet thy grace how may I tell?
Thy sweetness doth all these excel!
Fair is the smiling of the rose,
But thine strange mysteries doth disclose;

[1] *Ṭiḷakāñchī Kavitā*, p. 120. "Tāī" strictly means "Sister," but is often used loosely, as here, for "Daughter."

And opening rosebuds cannot show
Such sweetness as thy lips bestow.

All the planets of the night
Gleam but with a borrowed light;
But thou dost shine by thine own grace,
And shed'st thy light in every place.

Jewels sparkle fair to see,
Yet how hard and cold they be!
And, how bright so e'er they shine,
Their beauty waxeth not like thine.

Happy birdie all day long
Trills his many-splendoured song;
But th' angel choirs that make heav'n ring
Dance with joy when thou dost sing!

Almost as fine is his description of *An American Girl*,[1] with its closing lines:

Like morning light that laughs across the world,
Or the sweet dream that thrills a poet's heart,
She is Simplicity or Beauty's self,
Lighting today upon this earth from heav'n.

The flower-poetry is even more characteristic of Ṭiḷak than the child-poetry. That he himself entertained this opinion appears from his lines in *The Flower of the Forest*:

Naught else in all the world to poet's heart
Giveth such inspiration as dost thou,
And to no other creature have I sung
So many songs, sweet flower, as to thy kind.

He called himself "the bee among the flowers," and was never happier than when he could wander amongst them where they were growing wild. He loved above all the great blossoming creepers, which surrounded him in such profusion in the Koṅkan of his childhood. But he seldom picked the flowers, and he disliked to see women wear them

[1] *Ṭiḷakāñchī Kavitā*, p. 139.

in their hair. He liked them to live and die where God had set them.

Much has been written about *The Flower of the Forest*,[1] the longest and greatest of these flower-poems. The poet wanders into the jungle and sees there a flower which captivates his heart by its delicate grace, and a long dispute ensues in which the poet complains that the flower is wasting its beauty in the lonely wilds, and urges it to come with him and live in the world of men, where it may be loved and admired, and so be serviceable, whilst the flower answers that it serves God best in the free life of the open forest where He has placed it, and that it knows the fate of flowers which man plucks and uses for his selfish ends. The poet, whose love for the flower's beauty has been growing purer and more spiritual, makes a final appeal to it in love's name:

> Yet once again I tell thee—life and love,
> These are not twain but one, for love is life.
> And to lose love is to be surfeited
> With nothing else but self, which is to die.
> He that for love's sake scorneth happiness,
> He only findeth happiness fulfilled.
> He that for love's sake yieldeth up his flesh,
> He only findeth true salvation.
> Love is salvation, love is happiness,
> Yea, love is heav'n, and God Himself is Love.
> Come, let us clothe us in the form of love,
> And then perforce must we be joined with God!
> Ah! sweetest floweret, He that rules this world,
> Love is His Name! What can I tell thee more?
> Cease now thy hermit days and come with me!
> None other boon but this I ask of thee.

Even to this last appeal the hermit flower will not yield, and the poet sadly goes his way. But, as he abandons his

[1] Ibid. pp. 26 ff.

quest of the flower's material beauty, in that very moment the spiritual love of both is consummated; for the flower drinks the tears which the poet sheds in parting, and finds its whole world filled henceforth with his presence; and the poet likewise discovers his heart all unawares transformed and the flower blossoming for ever within it.

The poem has received many interpretations. Says Sir Nārāyaṇ Chandāvarkar (in an article in *The Times of India* upon Ṭiḷak's poetry): "In this poem some have discerned the doctrine of the *Bhagavadgītā* about contemplation and action preached by the poet. It may be so; but to me it is enough to read into it a simpler moral, that our habitual way of treating flowers is more or less desecration. The moment flowers bloom we pluck them for our gods or women; and the gardens of God, where they form such a splendid galaxy of stars to teach us how they grow and worship, are laid bare and turned into waste places. So we turn flowers, as we turn men, into means, when they ought to be all ends in themselves. Mr. Ṭiḷak's heart of poetry bloomed when he left the forest flower in its proper place; the flower then entered into his spirit and yielded music. True gardener he and the like, who give room enough for the soul of man to grow in his proper place like a flower living free in its garden, instead of being plucked for our selfish ends to decorate our bodies and serve our tables of artificial life."

Ṭiḷak himself, whilst he would not have repudiated an interpretation so closely in keeping with his own feeling about the flowers, certainly intended the primary teaching of the poem to be found in its spiritualization of physical love. The poem, so he says in one of his letters, "gives the process of my own growth. The poet is first drawn and captivated by the beauty, purity and delicacy of the floweret. He loves these in it, and not itself. But that was at the out-

set. Thus his love, and his efforts to win the flower for himself, awaken the spiritual in his subconsciousness, which moulds his thought, his sentiment and desire, until at last he loves the same flower with divine love."

This glorification of pure spiritual love was, perhaps, Ṭiḷak's most striking contribution to Marāṭhī poetical literature. The conception of such a love, he writes, which, "excepting Jesus Christ, has never been the *instinct* of any one, in cases of men and women gifted with divine vision has grown, or rather evolved, out of the lower planes of love—maternal, filial, fraternal, conjugal. The evolution is a spiritual process, and those who lack the Spirit cannot attain it. Shakespeare, the finest word-painter of human nature, seems never to have conceived any idea of this evolution of love. He was a conventional believer in Christianity, and, therefore, has fallen in his *Tempest* much below Tennyson who could produce *Enoch Arden*. He in the *Tempest* gives us the finest picture of *innocent conjugal love*. Tennyson gives us a higher picture, the picture of a love which knew the happiness of conjugal relationship and yet was far above it. Shakespeare often makes me angry by his low estimate of womanhood in general. He has heroes, but rarely heroines, except in a formal sense."

This conception of pure spiritual love forms the chief theme of those poems of home and family life into which, during the third and longest period of his literary activity, the earlier child-poetry expanded; notably, *Pure Love and Separation*, *The Undefinable Something*, *Liking and Love*, *A Riddle*, *Suśīlā*, and the new version of his early poem, *My Wife*, which he produced after many years' experience of what married love can be. The first four of these are short poems. Here is a rough rendering of *A Riddle*:[1]

[1] *Ṭiḷakāñchī Kavitā*, p. 101.

There is a plant grows in the soil of pain—
Guess ye its name?—that drinketh tears for rain,
And climbs most swiftly skywards when the rays
Of Separation's sun all fiercely blaze.

There is a potion—can ye name it true?—
At taste whereof dead men gain life anew,
Dumb lips break forth in music past compare,
And blind eyes ope on visions wondrous fair.

There is a spell so strange—guess yet again—
It drives men frenzied, though in heart most sane;
Its mystic wisdom knows nor "thou" nor "I,"
And he who plumbs its secret scales the sky.

Guess ye my riddle! What is this so fair
That, where it blossoms, God is always there?

Suśīlā[1] is an exquisite idyll of a girl growing up from childhood to womanhood. It opens with the account of her return home from school and with a beautiful description of what a Christian home should be:

Is there on earth a spot so fair
As can with that true home compare,
Where every thought of "mine" and "me"
Is swallowed up, nor shall you see
One speck of selfish coveting,
For Love is crowned eternal King;

Where grasping pride is all unknown,
And others' good is as one's own,
And each with each makes speed to vie
In deeds of lowliest ministry;

Where beneath forms of diverse kind
One single self-harmonious mind
Suffers and triumphs, laughs and sighs,
And mortal earth seems Paradise;

Where, under tenderest cherishing,
All loftiest, fairest virtues spring,

[1] *Ṭiḷakāñchī Kavitā*, pp. 59 ff.

Blossom as in some garden bower,
And ripen into fruit and flower;

That home which nurtures from their birth,
And gives in largesse to the earth
Poet and hero, saint and sage,
First source of all their pilgrimage;

God's stairway by which men aspire
To the three summits of desire;[1]
A precinct which the Lord Divine
Inhabits as His sacred shrine;

Is there on earth a spot so fair
As can with that true home compare?

The poet describes Suśīlā's gradual growth in knowledge and in years, and the simplicity of her Christian faith:

Her Lord beside her she doth see;
Her Way, her Truth, her Life is He;
Still she delights to sing the lays
That lulled her in her cradle days.

Then as she grows, pride enters in, and by pride all the bloom and freshness of her fair girlhood is spoiled. She reaches the age of Christian marriage, and is loved with a pure and selfless love by a boy named Charudatta, whom her parents urge her to wed. But her pride in her own beauty and accomplishments leads her to scorn him as unworthy of her, and she leaves her home to escape her parents' importunity, whilst Charudatta resolves that, though he may not have her, he will cherish her image always, and wed himself only to the Lord for His service. Suśīlā's parents beg her to return and promise not to press for her marriage, and she comes again to her home, but it is a home and a home-coming far different from those of the early

[1] The satisfactions of religion, of wealth and position, and of the pleasures of sense.

days, blighted by pride and selfishness. But now that pride receives the first blow. She has sat for the University Matriculation, and so has Charudatta; but, when the list of successful candidates appears, his name is on it, but hers is nowhere to be found. Soon follows the second blow. She is smitten down by a severe illness; and, when at last she recovers, all her beauty has left her and the freshness of her youth has perished. But pride has been humbled, and with the loss of physical beauty her beauty of soul has been restored. She resolves to pass her days in solitude, sure that no one can now desire her; but in her solitude Charudatta finds her, and assures her of his unaltered love. It was not her perished charms which had allured him.

> Beauty and youth do passion please;
> Love feedeth not her soul on these.
> Rich pearls, not oysters, be my part!
> Thy form I seek not, but thy heart.
> Golden or earthen be the bowl,
> Its nectar's draught inflames my soul!

With a wondering joy, that can scarcely find words to answer love so strange and rich, she believes and accepts him.

> "Ah dearest love," she whispers, "thou,
> My true protector, guard me now!"
> And with the flood of tears that spring
> Her love anoints him as her king!

Just as the child-poetry of his earlier years widened out later into these poems of love and home, so the earlier flower-poems expanded into nature-poetry in which the birds and the beasts, the rivers and the trees, the hills and the valleys, the glories of morning and evening, all play their part. The earth to him, as to Wordsworth, seemed "apparell'd in celestial light, the glory and the freshness

of a dream." It was a temple filled with the very Presence of God, and resounding with His praises; and this was a consciousness which, instead of growing fainter with him as the years passed, seemed rather to deepen in intensity and vividness. The following abhaṅg,[1] though it belongs to his latest years, may be quoted here as illustrating this sense which he possessed of the pervading Presence of God and of Nature's worship of Him:

I waited, nor had need to tarry long
When earth broke into universal song.
The trees with mute, gesticulating speech
Proclaim Thy still-new wonders, each to each.
The birds pour forth their blitheful minstrelsy;
Known unto them their language—and to Thee!
What marvel if I, too, with them awhile,
Sharing their secret utterance, nod and smile.
The grasses rippling merriment and dance—
How could mere voice such utterance enhance?
The babbling brooks entrancéd sing Thy praise;
The mountains listen in entranced amaze.
Saith Dāsa, O my God, where'er I be
In this Thy world, Thy worshippers I see.

Another poem, *The Ascent of the Hills*, was written on the way up from Wai to Pāñchgaṇi, and gives a very fine description of the scenery of that part of the Western Ghats. But the longest and most beautiful of his poems of Nature is the one called *Nature's Bhāūbīj*. "*Bhāūbīj*" is a Hindu festival in the autumn, at which brothers give presents to their sisters and the sisters salute them by the waving of lights before them. The poet imagines the whole of Nature as celebrating this festival, and pictures the mutual salutation of those objects or powers in the natural world which seem fitted to play the part of brothers and those which seem to

[1] No. 93.

answer appropriately to them as sisters. The conception is one which gives full scope to Ṭiḷak's playful fancy and to his vivid sense of the love which shines forth from the whole visible world.

The last group of Ṭiḷak's secular poems about which something ought here to be said is that which comprises his national and patriotic songs. One of these has already been given in his own translation in the last chapter.[1] Another, *Beloved India*, has become almost the National Anthem of Mahārāshṭra. But I cannot do better than quote here what Sir Nārāyaṇ Chandāvarkar has said about this whole group of Ṭiḷak's poems, in the article from which an extract has already been given. Ṭiḷak, he writes, "loves his land, sees in it 'a diadem of the terrestrial globe,' sights the vision of saints, seers and soldiers of the past of his country, discerns a beneficent Providence in India's association with Britain, and sounds the poet's trumpet-call with his larger faith and hope for the future. Mr. Ṭiḷak's poem called *Raṇaśiṅg*[2] has all this power of prophecy in it, and I for one have read it heartened many a time. There dwells the soul of his flowering poesy in it. To enter into the spirit of that poem and let that spirit flow into ours, we must read along with it his poems headed *Tumultuous Noises*, *Uproar*, and *Absence of Unity*. The poet meets a number of men, some educated, others illiterate, who wrangle over the present times in India, when congress and conference, Moderate and Extremist, Theist, Theosophist and Ārya Samājist, Brāhman and Śūdra, touchable and untouchable, social reformer and social reactionary, Moslem and Hindu, divide the minds and hearts of India, and no one can say where we are and whither we are going. On another occasion the poet seems

[1] See p. 54. [2] "The battle-trump." Sanskrit, raṇaśṛiṅga.

mad with joy when all around him is conflict, and he is asked how he could be musical amidst all this noise and disturbance. These poems give his answer—it is out of discord concord will come, as light comes out of darkness; the very noises of the times, so tumultuous, have behind them the song of God, which struggles to come out. And, says the poet in his poems on *Co-operation*, on *True Liberty*, and on *Perpetual Youth*, it will be a song of harmony if in the midst of these discords his countrymen will follow him, and see with open vision how Nature in India — her mountains, rivers, trees, plants and birds, seeming to give discordant noises, and going different ways, work all together co-operant for God's ends, because they are selfless. Let the student of Mr. Ṭiḷak's poetry end the persual of these poems with his lyric, *Always Young*, and find hope for his country in its perpetual youth. India is ancient, we say. Yes, her youth and growth are ancient, and therefore eternal. 'Come and see,' says the poet. The vision is for him who *will* see. See it with Mr. Ṭiḷak's two lyrics, *Beloved India* and *Triumph Britannia*, which conclude the first volume of his poetry."

The "first volume" here referred to was published in 1914 by his devoted friend and disciple, Bhāskarrāo Uzgare, and contains the great bulk of his secular poetry.

* * * * * *

His religious poetry, which we must now consider, falls into three divisions—the hymns and religious songs belonging to what I have called the third and main period of his literary activity (1900–1912), and the *Christāyan* and the *Abhaṅgāñjali* both belonging to the last period.

Most of the hymns and religious songs are gathered together in the *Bhajan Saṅgraha*, which Ṭiḷak first

published in 1906 with over a hundred bhajans.[1] Many of his hymns are also to be found in the hymn-book known as *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*. Reference has been made in the last chapter to the manner in which these hymns have transformed the worship of the Christian community and improved the quality of their speech. Many of the hymns are so simple that even uneducated congregations sing them with understanding and delight. Others, which have a larger percentage of pure Sanskrit words, are harder for simple villagers to understand, but even of these they seldom fail to follow the main drift. The bhajans are of many kinds. Some are adapted for preaching and singing in connection with evangelistic work. Others are intended for Christian worship. Of the latter some are hymns of praise, some of penitence, some are in the form of petition, and many are hymns of personal devotion and consecration. Three illustrations may be given. The first is typical of those bhajans which, in a succession of short verses, take up, one after another, certain thoughts or teachings about Christ with a refrain of praise after each. The second is a hymn of personal penitence. The third is a song of praise, also with a refrain.

THE MOTHER-GURU[2]

Refrain[3]

Tenderest Mother-Guru mine,
Saviour, where is love like Thine?

A cool and never-fading shade
To souls by sin's fierce heat dismayed:

[1] In the later editions of *Bhajan Saṅgraha* a second part was added with another hundred bhajans, most of which are not Ṭiḷak's.

[2] *Bhajan Saṅgraha*, p. 1.

[3] At the beginning and after each verse.

Right swiftly at my earliest cry
He came to save me from the sky:

He made Him friends of those that mourn
With hearts by meek contrition torn:

For me, a sinner, yea, for me
He hastened to the bitter Tree:

And still within me living, too,
He fills my being through and through.

My heart is all one melody—
"Hail to Thee, Christ! all hail to thee!"

A Broken and Contrite Heart[1]

Now at long last, my Lord and King—
In sorrow for my fruitless days,
Squandered in fond and foolish ways—
To Thy beloved Feet I cling.

A brave disciple I of Thine!
Right skilful in disciple's lore!
So mused I in my pride of yore—
Ah, now what bitter shame is mine!

Myself by my self-love betrayed,
From Thee I wandered far abroad,
With lips' allegiance named Thee Lord,
But mine own will's behests obeyed.

No strength have I—ah hear my call!—
No skill, no wisdom of mine own;
Thou, Saviour Christ, yea, Thou alone
Art now my wisdom and my All.

Suppliant I wait before Thy door:
This only mercy, Lord, impart—
Fold me for ever to thy heart,
Nor let me wander from Thee more!

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 285.

The Poet

A Christmas Carol[1]

Refrain[2]

Come high, come low, come all of you,
The Saviour of the world to view.

"All glory be to God Most High!"
The angel heralds sing,
"On earth be peace, good-will to men!"
How gay their carolling!
And the wide firmament on high
Doth with the echoes ring.
Come, let us join our song
With this celestial throng!

The prophets all, in heav'n's high hall,
'Gin dance with gladsome feet;
The simple shepherds leave their flocks,
And haste with paces fleet;
And holy sages from the East
Set forth their Lord to greet.
Let us with them unite
To view the wondrous sight!

Love downward hies in human guise
To save our fallen race,
With human hands to lift us up
Once more from death's embrace.

Come, let us throne Him in our hearts,
And sweetly sing His grace;
Sound we through hill and dale
"Hail, Jesu! Saviour, hail!"

The *Christāyan* belongs in the main to the last period of Ṭiḷak's life. For many years he had cherished the design of writing a life of Christ in Marāṭhī verse, which should be the first great Christian Purāṇa, comparable with the

[1] *Bhajan Saṅgraha*, p. 45.
[2] At the beginning and after each verse.

Rāmāyaṇa, or life of Rāma. Had it been completed, it would indeed have been a supreme Christian classic; but it would have been an exceedingly long work, and it was not in Ṭiḷak's nature, perhaps, to compose anything of this length. His genius found its truest expression in the shorter pieces that he poured forth when the spirit moved him, and he could never bring himself to the sustained effort of composition which a work like this demanded. The difficulty was increased by the metre of the poem. He wrote in the *Ovi* metre, which is traditionally suited to a theme of this kind; but, instead of following Jñāneśvara's scheme of giving each verse three rhymed lines and a short unrhymed fourth, he introduces the same rhyme in the middle of the fourth line also—an arrangement which Eknāth has also adopted, but which adds very considerably to the difficulty of the composition. Be the cause what it may, the *Christāyan* lacked the spontaneity of his other poetry. It was a task to which he had to force himself. His first attempt was made at the end of 1909 and beginning of 1910, when Dr. Hume made it possible for him to stay four months at Mahableshwar for this purpose. But his mind was full of an anthology of modern Marāṭhī poetry, called *Abhinava-kāvyamālā*, which he was editing, and a life of St. Paul that he wished to write, and the *Christāyan* made little progress. Then in penitence he went to a remote village near Wai, hoping to proceed with the work, but he found himself nursing the sick, helping the poor, preaching and lecturing, and even here only three or four chapters were written. His next attempt was in 1914, when he stayed for two months at Pāñchgaṇi with Mrs. Bruce, and wrote four or five chapters more; but this time the publication of the first volume of his poems diverted his attention from the other work. During the last years of his life the composition

of his abhaṅgs and the organization of "God's Darbār"[1] occupied most of his time; and so it came about that, when he passed away, of the long poem which he had planned he had written but the first section, that on the Incarnation, extending to some sixty-two pages, comprising eleven chapters, of which the last is incomplete. The work was published posthumously by his son in 1921.

Fragmentary as it is, the *Christāyan* will remain as a masterpiece of Christian Marāṭhī literature. The language is often difficult—far more so than that of Ṭiḷak's other poetry—but the stately Sanskrit words and forms, which constitute the main part of the difficulty, give to the poem a dignity which befits the theme. Though only the first book of the poem was achieved, the subject of that first book is a transcendent one, able to stand alone; and the work has thus a certain completeness, even in its unfinished state. If Ṭiḷak has failed to complete his Christian Rāmāyaṇa, he has nevertheless given us a great Purāṇa of the Christian *Avatāra*, or Incarnation. The book opens with the poet's invocation of God as Father, and a salutation of the apostles, but specially of Paul, from whom he has received the greatest inspiration. He expresses his confident assurance that, in spite of his own personal weakness, God will make him His instrument and speak through him a message of life-giving power to his country, which he longs to serve in her need. He then proceeds to tell the story of the Fall of man, and shows how God's love continued unchanged in spite of it, and so passes on to his central theme of the Incarnation. Two chapters deal with Mary and Joseph, and show how they were respectively prepared for the supreme event; and then in the sixth chapter, which was the poet's favourite, there is a

[1] See pp. 118 ff.

long digression upon the glory of womanhood and the relation of man and woman, in which Ṭiḷak's conception of spiritual love finds once again truly noble expression. Two short chapters follow, dealing with the birth of Jesus and the visit of the shepherds; and in the eighth chapter the coming of the Wise Men from the East is described, the central figure being an Indian sage, who is sympathetically pictured as the type of the Indian enquirer after truth. Two final chapters deal with the expectant Simeon and the widowed Anna in the temple, the latter theme remaining unfinished. This outline may give some conception of the scope and subject-matter of the poem, but no mere outline description can do justice to the splendour of its colouring or the wealth of illustrative detail with which it abounds. It is a noble tapestry, richly conceived and richly executed.[1]

The last of Ṭiḷak's works which we must note here, and in some respects the greatest, is his *Abhaṅgāñjali*—the collection of his abhaṅgs edited by Mr. B. Uzgare, and published shortly after his death. The abhaṅg is the metre in which Tukārām wrote his poetry, and which has come to be associated with hymns of devotion to God and themes dealing with the poet's personal life and experiences. Already in 1907 Ṭiḷak had produced a book of sixty-four on the Lord's Prayer, and in one of them he utters a prayer that he may be able to offer to God an "oñjal" (Sanskrit "añjali") of abhaṅgs, that is, an offering made in the two palms hollowed and outstretched together—the very title he afterwards gave to his book.[2] But most of them were

[1] A portion of the second chapter of *Christāyan* is translated on pp. 107–109.

[2] The abhaṅg here referred to is the eighth in the collection. Its early date effectually disposes of the suggestion that Ṭiḷak borrowed the title of his book from Rabindranāth Tāgore's *Gītāñjali*.

written during the last years of his life, when he used to publish one every week in the pages of the *Dnyānodaya*. The *Abhaṅgāñjali* is a collection of three hundred, mainly of this later period. They cover a wide range of subjects. Some are utterances of penitence and of "humble access" to God; some have rather the form of supplication and entreaty;[1] some are expressions of the poet's faith and descriptions of his spiritual experience; some are cries of longing for an ever-fuller consciousness of the Divine Presence. Very beautiful are those which deal with yoga, or the path of union with God,[2] and those which describe the vision of Christ which came to him towards the end of his life.[3] Others treat of the renunciation to which his vision led him;[4] others describe the glory of India's spiritual heritage and the folly of those who ignore it in propagating religion or try to supplant it by Western forms.[5] Many are connected with special occasions in his life, and most touching are those which he poured out during his last illness, when he faced with a cheerful courage his passage through the Valley of the Shadow.[6]

Abhaṅgāñjali is the crown of Ṭiḷak's work; and, though the Christian conceptions underlying it make it difficult for his fellow-countrymen at first, perhaps, to appreciate it with quite the same sympathetic understanding which they accord to his other poetry, it is for these abhaṅgs, above all, that his name will ultimately live and be cherished. Nowhere does his thought rise to greater heights, and nowhere does it find for its vehicle language of more exquisite simplicity and beauty. But, above all, nowhere else has the poet given us so perfect a revelation of his own soul as in

[1] One of these is given on p. 48, "Grant me to give to men," etc.
[2] E.g. the poem at the end of this chapter. [3] Cp. p. 114.
[4] Cp. p. 115. [5] Cp. p. 59 f. [6] Cp. p. 124 f.

these abhaṅgs which flowed from him in his later days, when the lessons of a long life had made him ripe in experience and wisdom and twenty years of Christian service had perfected his devotion to his Lord. Small wonder that the late President of the Bombay Legislature could write to him: "I do not flatter you, but would crave your permission to say that your abhaṅgs in the *Dnyānodaya* have been among my favourite readings, particularly because of the simple charm in which your Muse presents the sacred picture of Christ and recalls the elevating atmosphere of the New Testament, which has been my best reading and study, the first thing when I rise at 4.30 every morning from bed."

It was Ṭiḷak's hope and desire that he might become the "Christian Tukārām of Mahārāshṭra." Posterity must judge whether he achieved his ideal. But many will agree with Dr. Macnicol—than whom few have made a deeper study of Marāṭhī devotional literature—that "he is of the true lineage of the bhakti saints." "He poured forth, week by week, up to his death a wealth of songs—simple, intense and passionate—in praise of his Lord. His *Abhaṅgāñjali* is a wreath of song that he was still weaving when it fell from his dying hand, and that is all fragrance and devotion. There is, in the simplicity and music of his verse, an incommunicable beauty that escapes one in translation. One example may, however, be given—an abhaṅg sent to the writer by Mr. Ṭiḷak with the request that it might be translated.[1] He must have meant to suggest that he considered it to contain the quintessence of his message. The rendering, however, contains nothing of the singing quality of the original. I have called it *Insatiate*:

[1] *Abhaṅgāñjali*, No. 124.

"The more I win Thee, Lord, the more for Thee I pine;
Ah, such a heart is mine.
My eyes behold Thee and are filled, and straightway then,
Their hunger wakes again!
My arms have clasped Thee and should set Thee free, but no,
I cannot let Thee go!
Thou dwell'st within my heart. Forthwith anew the fire,
Burns of my soul's desire.
Lord Jesus Christ, Beloved, tell, O tell me true,
What shall Thy servant do?

"Here we have once more the same cry that echoes with such passion of desire through the songs of all the Marāṭhā poet saints. Nāmdev uttered it five centuries ago:

"Why dost Thou leave me suffering?
O haste and come, my God and King!

I die unless Thou succour bring.
O haste and come, my God and King!

"No one who has heard it in Tukārām can ever forget its poignancy of longing. But there is a difference here. They cry for water as those dying of thirst on desert sands, he as one resting by the side of an everflowing fountain. There is a note of triumph and of content in his hymns that they rarely, if ever, attain."

The secret of that triumph and of that content we must explore more fully in the next chapter; but he has summed it up for us in one of the simplest and most exquisite of his abhaṅgs,[1] with which this long chapter may well close:

The Lord my Father-Mother is;
Naught can I lack, since I am His.
Then wherefore should I wealth desire,
Or after empty pomp aspire?

[1] No. 67.

For this world's gold is all alloy,
Its honour but an infant's toy,
Its fame an unsubstantial trance,
Its wisdom only ignorance.
Then, save Thyself, my God and King,
Is nothing left for coveting!
Do Thou this only gift impart—
Dwell Thou forever in my heart.
Saith Dāsa, Thou Thyself O Lord,
Art Thy disciple's sole reward.

VII

THE CHRISTIAN

TILAK was a great man, a great Indian, and a great poet; but, above all, he was (not in the narrow, but in the broadest sense of the word) a great Christian. The last greatness conditioned, and indeed almost constituted, the other three. It was his Christian faith and life which shone through his whole character, pruning away gradually its defects and ripening its noblest fruits. Then again we have seen that, just as it was his love of India which led him in the first place to seek and to find Christ, so the fulfilment of his quest, so far from denationalizing him, added a richer quality to his patriotism. Finally, no estimate of his poetry can ignore the fact that it is coloured throughout by Christian ideas, and that his devotional poetry, in which he reflects and develops most notably the poetical inheritance of Mahārāshṭra, is inspired by his loving allegiance to Christ. No picture of him, therefore, would be complete without some attempt to summarize what his new faith meant to him.

Yet, when we approach the task, we find that, just because his religion was interwoven so inseparably with all the varied strands of his life and work, in describing these we have inevitably described his religion also, and there is little left to add. Some points, however, may here be isolated for separate treatment.

Christianity, then, meant to Ṭiḷak, not primarily a set of doctrines or beliefs, not primarily a set of principles or rules of life, but a loving devotion to Christ Himself. "Pack up all your doctrines," he says to his friends from the West, "and let us first find Christ." "To me to live is Christ," "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God"—these were the favourite sentences which summed up for him the essence of his creed. It was the wonderful condescension and love of Christ, seen in the manger of Bethlehem, in the life of renunciation and loving service, and, above all, in the Cross of Calvary, which won from him the response of his devoted self-surrender. Here, once again, we see how he fulfils the great bhakti tradition of India. Just as Tukārām could sing unwearyingly of the love and grace of Viṭhobā, or Māṇikya Vāchaka the Tamil could tell in repeated lyrics how he was won to purity of life by the love of Śiva, with his neck for ever stained blue by the stream of poison which he drank down to save mankind—

> Thou mad'st me Thine; didst fiery poison eat,
> Pitying poor souls,
> That I might Thine ambrosia taste,
> I, meanest one—

so Ṭiḷak could never cease to extol the glory of that perfect revelation of the love of God, which stretches like a rainbow from the manger to the Cross of Christ, and in mingled self-abasement and rapturous self-devotion to give himself to that same Christ, alive through death for ever. Such lyrics of praise and humble self-devotion he wrote constantly. Some have been quoted already in previous chapters. Another, typical of many, may be given here:[1]

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 246.

The Christian

One who is all unfit to count
As scholar in Thy school,
Thou of Thy love hast named a friend—
O kindness wonderful!

So weak am I, O gracious Lord,
So all unworthy Thee,
That e'en the dust upon Thy feet
Outweighs me utterly.

Thou dwellest in unshadowed light,
All sin and shame above—
That Thou shouldst bear our sin and shame,
How can I tell such love?

Ah, did not He the heavenly throne
A little thing esteem,
And not unworthy for my sake
A mortal body deem?

When in His flesh they drove the nails,
Did He not all endure?
What name is there to fit a life
So patient and so pure?

So Love itself in human form,
For love of me He came.
I cannot look upon His face
For shame, for bitter shame.

If there is aught of worth in me
It comes from Thee alone;
Then keep me safe, for so, O Lord,
Thou keepest but Thine own.

Above all, it was the Cross which drew forth his wondering adoration. He had no subtle doctrine of the Atonement to propound, but he knew that, as he gazed at the figure of Christ crucified, he came to understand and to hate his own sin, and gained the vision of a love that drew out his wholehearted allegiance.

Hast thou ever seen the Lord, Christ the Crucified?
Hast thou seen those wounded hands? Hast thou seen His side?

Hast thou seen the cruel thorns woven for His crown?
Hast thou, hast thou seen His blood, dropping, dropping down?

Hast thou seen who that one is who has hurt Him so?
Hast thou seen the sinner, cause of all His woe?

Hast thou seen how He, to save, suffers thus and dies?
Hast thou seen on whom He looks with His loving eyes?

Hast thou ever, ever seen love that was like this?
Hast thou given up thy life wholly to be His?[1]

God is ever the unwearying Lover, athirst for man's love. Ṭiḷak came to see that his own search for God was as nothing compared with God's desire for him. At one time, he writes, he had given way to the temptation "to depend more on one's own thought, meditation and speculation than on direct prayer, reading of the Bible and consulting the saints and the apostles. . . . But, as I have said in the *Christāyan*, and as I have often experienced, it is not man who goes after God so much as God going after man in love. He seeks me, and I must never be such a fool as to believe that it is I who seek Him. Like a doting mother, it is He, my heavenly Father, who has once more brought me back to Himself, while I was running an absurd race."

In the last sentence there appears a conception which is a favourite one with Ṭiḷak, as it is also with Tukārām and with many of India's saints—the conception of God as combining the love of mother and of father. There is felt to be a tenderness and intimacy in the love of God, to which the nearest human parallel is a mother's love, and Indian devotion has never shrunk from calling God Mother.

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 144.

The Christian

In one of Ṭiḷak's most popular hymns, already quoted,[1] the name "Guru-Mother" is given to Christ, in whom the tenderness of God's love is seen in all its wonder. Similarly, in one of his abhaṅgs,[2] he describes how at one time he had tried to regard Christ as the Guru only and to take up the respectful attitude of the disciple, but had found it impossible. Christ is a Friend too intimate, too homely, too playful for that.

One moment sunshine, and one moment rain;
The next, a beauteous blending of the twain!
And mine own heart, changing twixt peace and storm.
With Nature's mood right strangely doth conform.

Ah, how such playful chances come to me,
Come, O my Christ, in Thy dear company,—
Seasons of mirth, more than my tongue could sing!
My spirit raves at mere remembering!

Once I bethought me, Thou my Guru art,
I Thy disciple, humble and apart;
Sat low before Thee thus, nor ventured near,
Schooling my mind to reverential fear.

Ah, folly mine! Thy smile upon me bent
Had shattered in a trice my fond intent!
I rose and ran to Thee, and could not check
My laughter, as I fell upon Thy neck!

In sooth, dear Lord, so winsome is Thy grace,
I cannot keep my due and proper place.
Saith Dāsa, Tell me true, hath any taught
Friendship with distance ever to consort?

To such a tender, seeking love as this the Christian cannot but render the response of bhakti, or loving devotion; and the two great means for deepening this bhakti, as the letter quoted above suggests, are the study of the New Testament and prayer. We have seen already how it was

[1] See p. 85. [2] No. 262.

the study of Christ's teaching and life in the Gospels which first drew Ṭiḷak towards Christianity,[1] and it was for him a life-study. The small portion of his life of Christ completed in the *Christāyan* shows how vivid he had made to himself, and could make to others, the story that the Gospels tell; and together with the Gospels he did not fail diligently to "consult the saints and the apostles" for the fuller interpretation of that life and character which they could give, revelling most of all in the epistles of St. Paul. His first crude ideas of prayer soon deepened into that richer conception of an intimacy of glad companionship with his Lord, which found expression in the abhaṅg just quoted and many another. One further illustration may be given:[2]

Prayer to a heart of lowly love
Opens the gate of heaven above.

Ah, prayer is God's high dwelling place
Wherein His children see His face.

From earth to heaven we build a stair,—
The name by which we call it prayer.

Prayer is the gracious Father's knee;
On it the child climbs lovingly.

Love's rain, the Spirit's holy ray,
And tears of joy are theirs who pray.

To walk with God, to feel His kiss,
Yea, prayer, His servant owns, is this.

The goal to which this *bhaktimārga*, or way of loving devotion, led him was nothing less than yoga,[3] or union

[1] See p. 19. [2] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 525.

[3] The secondary meaning of yoga as "the yoking of the human spirit with God," which seems to date from at least the beginning of the Christian era, was the sense in which Ṭiḷak most commonly used the word.

with Christ. He longed for, and experienced in ever-deepening reality, such a closeness of union with his Lord that his own separate personality, without losing its richness or value, should nevertheless be merged in the larger ocean of the life of Christ. "Now it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me," was for him something much more than metaphor.

As the moon and its beams are one,
So, that I be one with Thee,
This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord,
This is this beggar's plea.

I would snare Thee and hold Thee ever,
In loving wifely ways;
I give Thee a daughter's welcome,
I give Thee a sister's praise.

As words and their meaning are linked,
Serving one purpose each,
Be Thou and I so knit, O Lord,
And through me breathe Thy speech.

O be my soul a mirror clear,
That I may seen Thee there;
Dwell in my thought, my speech, my life,
Making them glad and fair.

Take Thou this body, O my Christ,
Dwell as its soul within;
To be an instant separate,
I count a deadly sin.[1]

The enjoyment of this union was independent of worldly comfort or physical well-being; nay, rather, it was deepened by any opportunity of sharing in the Cross of Christ. Outside the Bible, there were few books dearer to Ṭiḷak than Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, with its exultation in the Cross. The contrast between his own comparative

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 126.

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comfort and the poverty of his Master became more and more intolerable to him, until it led him to the sannyās, or "renunciation," of his last years. The joy which that decision brought thrills through many a poem, of which the following is an example:[1]

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.

My food I'll get in serving Thee;
Thy thoughts shall be as eyes to me,
I'll live and breathe to sing Thy praise
From this time onward all my days.
Thy feet I choose, the world resign,
For Thou, from this day on, art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

To Thee I offer child and wife,
My home and all my worldly life;
To Thee this body, too, I bring,
To Thee surrender everything.
My very self henceforth is Thine.
O take it, Lord, for Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

My thoughts and words are all of Thee,
Thou—Wisdom, Joy and Liberty.
Now Thee and me no rift can part,
One not in semblance but in heart.

Set free am I, and for me shine
The joys of heaven, since Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.

In the acceptance of the life of poverty he felt himself nearer to Christ. We shall see, also, how the experience of

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 717.

bodily suffering, when it came, only served to deepen his sense of union with his Lord. The great Christian sādhu, Sunder Singh, has testified to a similar experience.[1] In two other points Ṭiḷak notably resembled the Sādhu. He had, like him, as will be recorded in the last chapter, a vision of Christ which led him to a vital decision; and his experience of mystic union sometimes, though less frequently than with Sunder Singh, took the form of *samādhi*, or trance-like ecstasy, in which all conciousness of the material world was lost.[2] One such experience he describes in the poem called *Love's Samādhi*:[3]

Ah, Love, I sink in the timeless sleep,
Sink in the timeless sleep:
One Image stands before my eyes,
And thrills my bosom's deep;
One Vision bathes in radiant light
My spirit's palace-halls;
All stir of hand, all throb of brain,
Quivers, and sinks, and falls.

My soul fares forth; no fetters now
Chain me to this world's shore.
Sleep! I would sleep! In pity spare;
Let no man wake me more!

If Ṭiḷak was thus a true son of India in giving to devotion and prayer the primary place in his religious life, it must not be supposed from this that he was backward in Christian activity. Indeed, as previous chapters have shown, there were few men more untiringly active than he from morning

[1] See Streeter and Appasamy's *The Sadhu*, pp. 74–80.

[2] Ibid., Chap. V.

[3] *Ṭiḷakāñchī Kavitā*, p. 105. I have allowed myself here slightly more freedom in translation than usual, but the rendering was approved by Mr. Ṭiḷak, to whom I submitted it, as bringing out the true force of the original.

till night. If he felt that his soul must needs be feeding itself continually upon the company of his Lord, it was not for mere selfish enjoyment, but that he might go out from that tryst the stronger to serve his brethren. The untiring vigour and youth of his spirit, which remained unchanged till the end, is seen in the following poem, translated, I believe, by himself:

What has been done is not enough, do something more!
Labour on, oh labour on, do something more!

Vain is the mango tree which holds but one cluster of blossoms;
Fruitful it might be called, yet in very truth it is fruitless.

Not for a handful of jewels is earth called the mother of riches,
But for the mines of gems that lie hid deep in her bosom.

Ending and death are one, no need for cavil or question;
To feel that one's work were done were in truth to die prematurely.

Unresting the spheres roll on, nor is sleep ever known to their Maker;
That the Maker's servants should rest, what a false ideal and unworthy!

Cleave not to the thought that the past holds enough of good in its keeping;
What is good, what is fair, what is best, this is known alone to the Godhead.

Speak not of less and more, thus yielding again to temptation;
Why strive ye to limit the life that knoweth no limitation?

His activity as a Christian worker was many-sided. He believed that for a Christian all life was sacred, and that he must endeavour to extend his influence into all spheres. "You know," he writes to his son, "that life is one, and one only, with various phases, such as the social, the political, the

religious, and so on, and that, Christianity being mainly 'life,' a Christian should not seclude himself from any of these phases, but go on trying to purify and ennoble each." The whole of this book witnesses to the faithfulness with which he put this belief into practice. Only towards the end of his life, when the "call of sannyās" began to sound in his ears, he came to feel that he had, perhaps, given too large a share of his time to activities not directly concerned with religion. In the same letter to his son, which was written in 1915, he continues: "I still believe so" (viz. that Christian activity should permeate all spheres of life), "but I have by experience found that this belief is beset with dangers. I with this belief went ahead and identified myself with so many different activities that ultimately I found myself too much engrossed with them to be free and inclined to commune with God, to think of my own spiritual well-being, and to do direct and actual Christian duties like preaching the Gospel and helping a weak or erring brother. I experienced a kind of spiritual hunger with no earnest desire to satisfy it. It was a terrible state of mind, but thank God that He touched my heart and I retraced my steps from the folly. I kept no proportion while meddling with various human activities, and that was the folly. This led me to think and act without Christ, while my motto was, 'With Christ everywhere,' and all this had its effect on my disposition."

Yet, in spite of what he says here, those who saw him felt that his whole life was a witness to the love of Christ in action. He lived out the spirit of his own bhajan, "The service of men, this is the truest service of the Lord." Love was to him the supreme secret of useful work, and nothing pained him more than to see young men and women, and specially Christians, growing up with no ideals of service to the community. "The worst temptation," he writes, "that

comes upon educated young men and women in India, is that they become extremely self-seeking and self-sufficient, and hence ultimately they deprive themselves of the great and divine privilege of loving and being loved."

Love, too, was the keynote of all that evangelistic work which lay so near to his heart and constituted so large a share of his activity. His eager desire to win men to Christ was born simply of a longing to share with them the treasure which he himself had found. He was entirely free from that spirit of proselytizing which Christ Himself denounces so vehemently and which has aroused a not unnatural resentment among non-Christians in India—that mercenary spirit which glories in statistics and reckons success by the number of adherents it has gained to the Christian ranks. His conception of the meaning of Christ was too large for that. What he felt called to propagate was, not one particular religious system as set over against other systems, but the Kingdom of God—*swarāj*,[1] as he called it—a message transcending all mere systems of religion, a message that was life, and the true and only life, which is love.

Say, if it please you, that all faiths are one;
Say, if you will, they differ each from each!
I care not for these idle questionings,
And stand beyond such wordy warfare's reach.

To us Thy Kingdom hath appeared, O God,—
That Realm which all religions doth comprise;
With Christ we died, with Christ we have arisen,
And live in Thee the life that never dies.[2]

Thus he had no belief in mere argument. He had no

[1] Literally, "the Kingdom of Heaven," to be distinguished from *swarāj*, "self-rule."

[2] Abhaṅg No. 196.

interest in trying to show others to be in the wrong. He believed that India, and all the world, was waiting to be shown Christ Himself in all His beauty, and that there was no other way to show Him than by love. "God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son into it. The Son so loved the world that He suffered agonies to save His very enemies. Let the Indian Christians so love their own country that they will sacrifice all for it, and India will accept Christ."

The task of thus presenting Christ to India was one which called forth all his powers of heart and brain, and which inspired him with high hopes. He believed that his country was passing through the travail-pangs of a new birth, and that she was destined to become in due time the spiritual preceptor of the world, consecrating her profound mystical intuition and her ancient learning in the service of Christ, and becoming the supreme interpreter of His Gospel. Nowhere is this more beautifully expressed than in the second chapter of the *Christāyan*:

Ah Aryan land, blest, blest is she!
A magic might is in her name;
Unrivalled stands her ancient fame;
And we, her sons, thrice blessed are we!

The fabled cow of mystic lore
Here taketh form before our eyes,
Or that fair tree of Paradise
Which poet-seers described of yore.[1]

Before her sages' proud array,
Her saints' and warriors' marshalled row,
The great ones of the earth bend low
And at her feet their tribute pay.

[1] The reference is to the *Kāmadhenu* of Hindu legend, viz. the cow which fulfils all desires, and the similar conception of the *Kalpa-vṛiksha*, or tree yielding all manner of blessings.

Narayan Vaman Tilak

In Sarasvatī's[1] lore profound,
Like fish in some enchanted sea,
The pandits of all lands range free,
Yet vainly seek its depths to sound.

* * *

The slow-revolving wheel of Time
Brings ordered changes. In the west
The punctual sun sinks to his rest,
To awake again with morning prime.

What time the heaven's friendly light
Is quenched with clouds, and the mud clogs
The oozy pastures, and the frogs
With clamorous croakings cleave the night,

Not idle in his homestead stays
The farmer, banished from his fields;
Its proper task the season yields,
Nor brooks unprofitable days.

Nor without desperate pangs, that none
May share, and fluttering soul o'ercast
By darkling terrors, at the last
The mother clasps her first-born son.

Hail, happy omens! presaging
The goal of all my country's woes,—
Pledge that from out her travail-throes
A new and glorious birth shall spring.

Yea, at the end of pregnant strife,
Enthroned as guru of the earth,
This land of Hind shall teach the worth
Of Christian faith and Christian life.

In sooth her name, in letters bright,
Before all other names, I trow,
Is writ, Lord Christ, upon Thy brow;
And her to serve is my delight.

When shall these longings be sufficed
That stir my spirit night and day?

[1] The Hindu goddess of literature.

When shall I see my country lay
Her homage at the feet of Christ?—

Yea, how behold that blissful day
When all her prophets' mystic lore
And all her ancient wisdom's store
Shall own His consummating sway?

Now soul and body, mind and will,
Honour and name, my wealth, my all,
Brethren and kindred, great and small,
I yield, Thy purpose to fulfil.

Of all I have, O Saviour sweet,—
All gifts, all skill, all thoughts of mine,—
A living garland I entwine,
And offer at Thy lotus feet.

So for Ṭiḷak life was all summed up in Christ. In His companionship he went forth, morning by morning, to his day's work; to Him he gave, day by day, the witness of a life of loving service; at His feet he offered each purpose and each task, in the spirit of his own hymn:[1]

Arise, arise, my soul, and praise
Give to the Lord of nights and days.
Forth on the path of life once more,
And God, the glorious, adore.

The thought of Him made glad the night;
His service gave the day delight.
Both have we at His footstool spent,
In his blest fellowship content.

Whate'er within the future lies
Bring thou to Christ a sacrifice,
Establishing a faith complete,
O soul of mine, at Jesus' feet.

Search thou the world from end to end—
Where is there such another friend?

[1] *Upāsanā Saṅgīt*, No. 50.

He leads thee on with loving care;
Ah, follow thou Him everywhere.

His task to save, to take thy part,
To teach thee, heal thy wounded heart;
To thy spent soul new life to bring,
To call thee back from wandering.

Thou art the weapon, He the hand;
All purposes His mind has planned.
Thy will upon His altar lay,
And go thou forth with Him today.

VIII

THE SANNYĀSĪ

NOTHING is more distinctive of Nārāyaṇ Ṭiḷak than the unfailing freshness and alertness of his spirit. His mind never stagnated, never rested content with its past achievement. He was continually prepared for new adventure, aspiring to the conquest of new realms. It was so in his literary activity; for, whereas the majority of poets do their best work before they reach middle age, Ṭiḷak's greatest poetry, as we have seen, was written when he was past fifty. It was so in his religious life and work, for at no period was his readiness for new enterprise more eager or his spiritual insight more penetrating than in that adventure of his last two years, which we have now to record.

In March, 1916, Ṭiḷak wrote to his son: "On the day that I started for Poona last month, as I sat in the train at Nagar station, an old man came and saluted me. He was a Brāhman who knew me intimately some thirty years ago. After some formal talk, he told me how he and many others like him felt when they heard the news of my baptism. They all thought that I was a traitor, not only to Hinduism but also to India, my own dear land. He said that this misunderstanding and intense hatred were the measure of the real and intense love and respect they feel on seeing that I am still a genuine lover of my country. . . . But all, he said, were sorry that I should be a Christian. He himself

was sorry, because he felt that as a Hindu I had in me both the spirit and magnetism of any great sādhu of India, which as a Christian I had lost. He reminded me of the fact that scores of people, both great and small, were attracted by me, and followed me like lamps when yet I was so young and imperfect, and asked me what became of all that great magnetic power in me. I did not know what to say. I simply kept quiet. I could not preach anything to him, because his remarks had made me fully conscious of what I was and what I am, and had humbled me to the dust, as I looked at my present state and at Jesus, the Life and Light of the world. He soon left me, as if giving me a new message and creating a turning-point in my life. I was at once upon my knees, buried deep in prayer, meditation and communion with God, and thinking of the whole history of my life. I awoke as if from a trance, a new man, believing that God wills to make me a living likeness of Jesus for India, and from that moment till now I enjoy a change and joy which words cannot adequately express."

The occasion proved indeed to be a "turning-point" in his life. Although for the present his work at Ahmadnagar went on quietly to all outward appearance, inwardly new thoughts were taking possession of him, new hopes coming to the birth. After twenty years of quiet, faithful work in the service of the Mission, he was now launching out upon a new quest with the same spirit of dauntless adventure that had marked his early days. In July of that year he wrote to his son: "I am at present studying, and meditating on, the life of St. Paul, not for others but for my own personal guidance and help. I am doing it humbly and prayerfully. . . . God has been leading me, where I can't say just now, but I can say towards some larger service. India needs Christ, not so much Christianity, and Christ she

is to get in and through Indian apostles, as God raises them. I am praying for this."

More and more he felt that God was calling him to become such an "Indian Apostle." "I trust that I am the elected Tukārām for Mahārāshṭra," he writes; and adds, with characteristic boldness, "a Tukārām and a St. Paul blended together." He believed that hundreds would follow him, and that together they would build up an Indian Church on genuinely Indian lines. The Churches hitherto "imposed on India" were "useful in giving us so many patterns of church polity and government," but the time had come for a true Indian Church to be built up within them. Moreover, in order that he might lead a movement of this kind, he felt that he must be free from the service of the American Mission. So long as he was attached to one mission, and receiving a salary in its employ, he felt cramped and circumscribed. He could neither assert his own personality in the way he felt called to do, nor develop a comprehensive movement such as he envisaged. "I know I shall be soon a friend of all missions," he writes at this same period, "a free bird just able to soar high, just leaving the happy shelter of its mother's wings (I mean the American Marāṭhī Mission), free to be led by God alone, and to work exactly on Indian lines and by Indian tradition and principles. India needs a *Christian personality*, which must be willing to accept poverty, welcome persecution, to embrace death, and in dying to say, 'It is fulfilled,' and to 'live' after death."

Nevertheless, for a year after this, yielding perhaps to the persuasions of kind friends who were loth to let him go, Ṭiḷak still remained in the service of the Mission. But in July or early August of 1917 there came to him a vision of Christ—a vision too sacred to be described at first except

to his closest friends, but about which later he composed several abhaṅgs, the first of which I here give in translation:[1]

Ye ask, and so to tell ye I am bold;
Yea, with these eyes did I the Christ behold,—
Awake, not sleeping, did upon Him gaze,
And at the sight stood trancéd with amaze.
"My mind wanders," I said, "it cannot be!
'Tis but my own creation that I see!
Poor hapless fool!"—for so did I repine—
"How crooked and perverse a faith is mine!"
Yet was my patient Lord displeaséd not,
Nor for one moment He His child forgot:
Again He came and stood regarding me;—
Ah, surely ne'er was mother such as He!
I called to Him in sudden agony.
"My child," He answered, "wherefore dost thou cry?
I am before thee, yea, and I within;
Merged in a sea of blindness hast thou been."
"Lord, grant me eyes to see!" I cried again,
And clasped His feet in ecstasy of pain.
He raised me up, He held me to His side,
And then—I cannot tell what did betide;
But this alone I know, that from that day
This self of mine hath vanished quite away.
Great Lord of yoga, Thou hast yoked with Thee,
Saith Dāsa, even a poor wight like me!

After this vision Ṭiḷak could delay no longer. He felt it to be a summons to him to launch out forthwith upon the adventure which had so long been drawing him. He was sure now that the Master was calling His disciple to follow Him in the way of poverty and simplicity, to enter upon that path of sannyās, which has ever attracted to itself the hearts of India's saints. The following abhaṅg[2] reveals the impatient eagerness of his mind at this time:

[1] Abhaṅg No. 22. [2] No. 109.

Thou hadst no servants to attend on Thee;
Then why this pomp of household state for me?

Course fare and scanty was Thy portion, Lord;
Then why for me this richly-furnished board?

Thou hadst not where to lay Thy head to rest;
Then why should I of mansions be possessed?

Ah, hapless I! What is this tyranny?
How dost Thou laugh and make a mock of me!

Ah, take from me this burden that doth bow
My head!—blest ocean of all love art Thou!

I speak in anger, Lord; yet, if Thou too
Reject my prayer, what can Thy servant do?

Saith Dāsa, Christ, upon Thy pallet bed
Grant me a little space to lay my head.

As a sannyāsī he would be following Christ, he felt, more closely than he could do in the service of a mission. As a sannyāsī, too, he would be making an appeal to his fellow-countrymen such as he could make in no other way. "India needs me," he had written only a few months before, "needs me to go about as my Lord having nowhere to lay down His head, as my Lord a friend of publicans and sinners, as my Lord whose meat and drink was to do the will of His Father in heaven, as my Lord walking meekly but bravely to the Cross. I know it, I have been dying for it, but alas! what holds me back I yet fully know not. My Lord had three years and odd to fulfil His mission. I pray that, though my portion be much less than that, yet I may have it before I am called away from this world."

His mind was made up now, and on September 6th, 1917, he wrote to the members of the American Marāṭhī Mission: "It is with feelings of the deepest gratitude, and of the

most earnest love and affection, that I take this opportunity to state that the American Marāṭhī Mission has been elected and enabled by God to be a spiritual mother to me and to prepare me for higher service of God and man. Then under its auspices and with its blessing I request to be relieved to do that service. The war, its moral consequences in the world, the new life and new angle of vision which it has diffused in nations, the new aspect of the mode of the world's thought and will, all this affecting India has made India quite ripe and quite ready to accept the great Originator and Helper of human life — social, political, moral and spiritual—Jesus Christ. But India will go after a man, a man elected by God to meet her ideals. Most humbly, but most firmly, I state to you and to the world that God has elected me, a weak sinner, for this purpose. This election requires my resigning a salary from the Mission or from any other human agency. So far I resign from the Mission, but never in other respects, if I possess a grain of gratefulness. I am, and ever shall be, the same friend and servant of the Mission, to do all things required of me as before."

Dr. Hume replied on the Mission's behalf, expressing their consent to his wish: "We respect and appreciate your conviction that our India urgently needs Indian Christians who feel called of God and moved to promote her spiritual life through service which appears to them to be in accordance with Indian ideals and Indian methods, involving renunciation of all assured support from any organization and from any man. In these days of India's spiritual travail our great, good God, who has chosen and guided you hitherto, will continue to guide and strengthen you for great service."

On September 8th Ṭiḷak announced publicly: "For the

sake of my country, for the sake of Christ's *Darbār*,[1] and for my own sake, I must be free, except in love and service, of all human agencies, and must be bound entirely and to all purposes to Christ and the Gospel. I, therefore, in response to God's Voice, cease from this day forth to be a Mission agent or to be anyone's dependant or servant. I am a Christian sannyāsī, which means a follower of *anurāga*,[2] and never of *virāga*,[3] and will try to be and do as I am bid by the Spirit of God. Let all those who love Christ, love India, and love me, help me by their mediation before the mercy-seat of God, our common Father."

So, at the age of fifty-five, with a wife dependent upon him but eager to join with him in his venture, with a son and daughter still needing to complete their education, Ṭiḷak renounced all means of support, and entered the *Sannyāsāśram*, the traditional last stage of life for India's children. It lasted for him but a short twenty months, yet those months were perhaps the most creative and fruitful of his whole life; for, in accordance with the conception of sannyās expressed in his public announcement, he did not withdraw himself to a life of solitary contemplation, but was more active than ever in Christian work.

The links of the old relationships were not severed. He kept still in touch with his friends of the American Mission, and they gave him a house at Satārā (30 miles south-west of Mahableshwar), to be a home for himself and his family. Here he lived in the intervals between his wanderings, and took his part in the life of the place, becoming the friend of Christians and non-Christians alike. One who knew him at Satārā in those days writes: "He was deeply interested in making the church worship on Sunday both devoutly

[1] See below. [2] Attachment, or love.
[3] Detachment from all passions and emotions, or indifference.

reverent and distinctively Indian. He was lovingly interested in *people*, and reached out in helpfulness to the poor and needy. He was held in high esteem by the educated men in Satārā, lawyers, etc., and was welcomed by them in their homes." But much of his time was spent in wandering from place to place, forming new friendships and working in a wider sphere.

The principal work which engaged him during these months, apart from his literary activity, was the movement which he called "God's Darbār." The Darbār was the outcome of convictions which had been gradually forming in his mind as to the relation of Christianity to India's ancient faiths and as to the way of presenting Christ to India. He had been gradually led to think of Christianity less as standing over against the other faiths of India in fundamental opposition to them than as being the goal towards which they were reaching out, and in which they would find their fulfilment. He believed that, if Christ could be presented to India in His naked beauty, free from the disguises of Western organization, Western doctrines and Western forms of worship, India would acknowledge Him as the supreme Guru, and lay her richest homage at His feet. He believed that there were already thousands of his fellow-countrymen who, while unwilling to accept the stigma of denationalization which the acceptance of Christian baptism seemed to imply, were yet at heart true disciples of the Christ, and that some society was needed which should band together all such true disciples, whether baptized or unbaptized, in a single brotherhood.

"The Lord Jesus Christ is founding swarāj[1] in man's heart, hence also in the world of men"—so ran his pro-

[1] See note on p. 106.

clamation of the Darbār. "By swarāj is meant the Kingdom of Heaven, the Rule of God. 'God's Darbār' is the name of that society in the hearts of whose members this swarāj, or Kingdom of God, is already established." The aims of the Darbār are stated to be: "To form a brotherhood of the baptized and unbaptized disciples of Christ, by uniting them together in the bands of love and service, without in any way opposing, or competing with, Christian Missions, Churches or other Christian organizations; to esteem all as our brothers and sisters, since our Father-God dwells in all hearts; to imitate 'the Son of Man,' the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Guru, who served men in uttermost love, though they nailed Him to the Cross; to manifest an eager desire to be considered the true brothers and sisters of that 'Son of God'; this brotherhood to become a real universal family, to be known as real friends of men and real patriots, through whom the world gains once more a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the Christ who was originally Oriental may become Oriental again; that Christian love, Christian freedom, and the Christian strength which enables men to rise above circumstances may be demonstrated to the world; that Christianity may gradually lose its foreign aspect and become entirely Indian; and the character of this brotherhood shall be such as to create in our fellow-countrymen the kindly attitude which will lead them to glory in thinking of Christian people as their very own."

The members of the Darbār pledge themselves to follow Jesus Christ as their Guru, and to meditate upon His life and character, His aims and teaching, with the help of the Bible and other books; to "think with Him and work with Him"; to pray to God in the morning, at noon, and at night; and to view the other members of the Darbār as brothers and sisters, so that "the world, seeing the brotherly

love of the members, shall be filled with astonishment and shall glorify" God. They undertake to attend divine worship once a week, to do some kind of disinterested work for their fellowmen, to contribute to the funds of the Darbār, and to bring at least one new member into it every year.

The following is the Darbār "vow":

"Like Thee, O Christ, I will remain poor.

"Like Thee I will serve.

"Like Thee I will be the friend of all, the enemy of none.

"Like Thee I will ever be ready to be nailed to a cross.

"Like Thee I will strive to do fully the will of God.

"Like Thee I will love all mankind.

"In the strength of faith I will abide in Thy Presence. Thy world and mine shall be one. I will strive after Thy likeness, and finally, being united to Thee, by my own personal experience I will prove to be true that saying of Paul, the chief of saints, 'Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.'"

Ṭiḷak himself, as founder of the Darbār, received the title of "the chief servant," and his home at Satārā became the Darbār centre, or "Āśram." In the brief period which remained to him he gathered in some forty to fifty members, who were almost entirely baptized Christians. His hopes of extending the Darbār among Hindus were disappointed. But the time was too short for a real testing of the movement, which never became widely known. On the part of a few of the missionaries there was a good deal of misunderstanding of, and opposition to, Ṭiḷak's new attitude and new methods of work; and this was to him a source of keen disappointment. Yet, in the main, it may be said that he extended his influence largely during this period, and received a warm welcome in the various stations that he visited. Given a few more years, the Darbār might

have taken root and spread, not only among members of the Christian Church but among others also. If it failed, it was a splendid failure; and it will not have failed if it supplies an inspiration and points a way which others may follow.

But more important even than this work of promoting "God's Darbār" was his literary activity during this period. Indeed, if we must express regret, it would be not so much a regret that he was unable to do more for the Darbār during this last brief period of his life, but rather that the whole of the time was not given to literary work. For the chief tragedy of Ṭiḷak's early death is that the *Christāyan*, that life of Christ in Marāṭhī verse which he had planned for many years, and which would have been the first great classic in the Marāṭhī tongue, remained incomplete, nay, most of it unwritten.[1] His friends were continually urging him to devote himself for a period to this work alone, and he himself felt the importance of doing so. It was hoped that, with his great powers of rapid composition, the work would soon be finished; and preliminary arrangements were even made with the Manoranjan Press for its printing; but alas! the time that remained to him before his final illness was all too short, and no more than one of the eleven books which he had planned ever saw the light.

In the meantime there was appearing every week in the *Dnyānodaya* one of those abhaṅgs which required of Ṭiḷak no effort of self-constraint, but flowed forth as from a fresh spring of unfailing inspiration. A large percentage of the three hundred abhaṅgs eventually collected together in the *Abhaṅgāñjali* belongs to this period; and it is this collec-

[1] See pp. 87 ff.

tion of abhaṅgs, as has been said above, which, in the judgment of the wisest of his contemporaries, constitutes Ṭiḷak's supreme gift to India and the Christian Church.[1]

But his time was now short — shorter than either he or his friends realized. His health, all through life, had in the main been good; and he maintained his physical activity longer than most men. As late as 1917, when he was fifty-five years old, he walked the twenty miles from Satārā to Wai in heavy rain with his son, and was ready to return on foot the next day, had not the younger man declared himself too tired. But from his early days he had suffered periodically from hæmorrhoids, and this trouble now became serious, and brought other complications with it. On January 19th, 1919, he wrote: "I am experiencing a very strange spiritual phenomenon. I am ill, very ill indeed, suffering from more than one symptom, sometimes in bed unable to move this way or that. But I pray; my prayer is such as absorbs me altogether in itself; and the result is that I am well, so well that it is very hard for anyone to believe that I was sick a short time ago. Thus it has been going on almost all through this month. This hour I am very ill, and the next hour I am very well. . . . This hour the *ghar*[2] rules the *ghardhani*,[3] the next hour ghardhani is himself again and rules the ghar."

In February he was better and full of plans for new work. On the 21st of that month he wrote: "God ordains that the Darbār should take up aggressive work. Two Indian graduates and an undergraduate, of whom two are ladies, have offered their services, if they get enough to keep body and soul together. No less than five other young persons who have gone as far as the Vernacular School Final

[2] See pp. 96 ff. [2] The house. [3] The master of the house.

are also ready to resign their work in Missions, where they get pay to their satisfaction, to come over to me if they but get pay enough to live. . . . After the *Christāyan* is finished, and if God spares me, work shall be started in the Southern Marāṭhā country."

But by the end of that month he was worse again, and was persuaded to go for treatment to the Wadia Hospital, of the United Free Church Mission, at Poona, where he remained throughout March and April. Bronchitis had supervened, and the doctors were afraid to operate; nevertheless all that medical skill could do to relieve his suffering was tried, and he was surrounded by loving care, and visited by many of his friends. His cheerful courage during this period, and his power of rising superior to his infirmity, were a wonder to all who witnessed it. When the physical pain became unbearable, he would sing one of his own songs, and many of his most beautiful abhaṅgs were composed at this time. Sunday by Sunday he would preach to his fellow-sufferers in the ward, and on each occasion he found that all bodily trouble strangely disappeared as the hour drew near for preaching Christ. On April 16th he wrote: "Neither doctor nor I can tell you whether I am improving. But one thing is certain, and that is, 'Blessed, doubly blessed, is all this pain; it is experiencing the Cross in my body. Blessed, thrice blessed, is this sickness; it is perfect union with Christ.'[1] With Christ, and in Him, all my pain disappears; it comes again when I miss Him. The doctor and all here wonder at it. I am, with all my sickness, as it were, the pastor of the hospital! Praise God with me."

In May he transferred to the J. J. Hospital in Bombay,

[1] No. 297.

where it was hoped that an operation might be possible; but once again the doctors dared not operate, and he became rapidly weaker. But here, too, there was the same marvellous cheerfulness, the same mastery of the pain. When his wife and daughter visited him, on the day before he died, he gave them, in the midst of burning fever, his last message. "He asked us not to fear death, as it was only a temporary bodily separation, which led to a perpetual union of souls and a passing into a better life. He asked us to rise above circumstances and be victors in the battle of life with the help of God, defying all the forces of evil."

The spirit in which he faced death can be seen best in the abhaṅgs which he composed during this last illness. Out of many which might be chosen in illustration I give three :[1]

Come, O my Christ, be we sitting and lying
Together, both of us, laughing and crying!
Day of this several "I" and "Thou"
Pass to its final setting now!
Thus in this flesh if it may not be,
What recketh then this flesh to me?
Once to be rid of it, brave and free,
'Twere the day of a great festivity!
Where hearts are one, I, Dāsa, declare,
None reckoneth aught of "here" or "there."

O Brother, on my shoulder rests Thy hand,
And fearless waits my soul;
O Way, erect on Thee I take my stand,
And radiant gleams my goal;
O Truth, within the warmth of Thine embrace,
All doubts dissolving die;
O Life, before the sunshine of Thy face,
Death perisheth, not I!
Thy servant saith, Today there draweth near
That latest valley,—and wherefore should I fear?

[1] Nos. 296, 299, 300.

And then the last of all:

Lay me within Thy lap to rest;
Around my head Thine arm entwine;
Let me gaze up into Thy face,
O Father-Mother mine!

So let my spirit pass with joy,
Now at the last, O Tenderest!
Saith Dāsa, Grant Thy wayward child
This one, this last, request!

On Friday, the 9th of May, his spirit "passed with joy" to the "great festivity"; and it was the note of festival which marked the service in the Hume Memorial Church, in Bombay, the next evening, after which his body was carried to Worli to the strains of his own bhajans, and there cremated, according to his own wish.

"None knows when he will have the *devādnyā*" (the call of God), he had written in his will, "and none ought to be thinking of it unnecessarily. That experience I am never willing to call death. It is *devādnyā*, the call of God. it is awakening into a new life. *Anyāsēna maraṇam viṇā dainyena jīvanam* ('no trouble while dying, no trouble while living') is the privilege of a Christian, and through Christ I enjoy it to a greater extent than I or anyone can guess."

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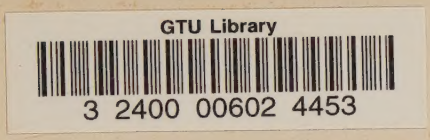

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